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THE

NABOB AT HOME;

OR,

THE RETURN TO ENGLAND.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "LIFE IN INDIA."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
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1842.

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C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

THE

NABOB AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.

Yet Caledonia, dear are thy mountains,
Round their white summits though elements war,
Tho' cataracts foam, 'stead of smooth flowing fountains,
I sigh for the valley of dark Loch na Garr!

BYRON.

DOCTOR M'ALPIN, like most men in India, had for years after his arrival, sighed for the time when he should be enabled to revisit his native land—when he should be enabled with honour and credit to support

the dignity of his ancient house ; and like many others also, he had deferred his departure from year to year, though many a year had passed since he had realized all that he had originally fixed upon as the utmost extent of his wishes.

When he had the power, and could go at any time, he found that "it was ridiculous for a man in the meridian of life to withdraw from active employment, and to sit down contented with little more than the patrimony of his ancestors." Then, "it was unwise to resign a splendid appointment, which put fortune in his power, and gave him the opportunity of serving his friends." The death of his father and mother depressed his spirits, and "made him less anxious about returning just so soon"—that of his grandfather followed, and put him in possession of Fernbraes, the estate of his forefathers; more fertile in purple heath-bells than golden grain.

"He was now the head of the house, and consequently more was expected of him,

and since he had staid so long, he might even stay a little longer, and go amongst his own people, as the only surviving male branch ought to do."

Last of all, came tidings of the death of his only and much beloved sister—the companion of his childhood—the friend of his youth—one whose image never rose to his mind unassociated with recollections of early happiness and tender love. She had been his confidant and counsellor in all his projects—in all his wishes. She had listened with unwearying patience to his early and ardent desires to see the world—she had walked with him over the heath and on the sea-shore — she had talked of his future hopes and his future prospects a thousand and a thousand times, and she, in the pride and fondness of sisterly affection, had foreseen and foretold his prosperous return; and though long years had passed since, this stroke brought her before him with the renewed feelings of early affection.

He felt her arms upon his neck—he heard the blessing which came from a bursting heart, when she kissed him at parting, and he looked up as if he almost expected to see the sister of his love, leaning over him as she had done then; but she for months had lain in the dark and narrow house before the information of his loss had reached him, and their earthly intercourse was finally closed.

"I have waited," he said, speaking to himself, as was his usual custom when any thing agitated his mind, "until one year after another has taken every one from me that ever I wished to see; and now," he spoke in bitterness, "I'll wait no longer. Am I not old, and rich, and childless, and friendless, and who is to come after me in Fernbraes for which I have done so much? —who is to uphold the honour of the ancient roof-tree? Much have I expended, and much have I remitted for planting and improving the old place, which in my day

was a thought o'er bare, though it cannot be that now—but I fear the plantings will never shelter me or mine."

Strange as it may seem, the doctor now actually set about making the preparations which he had so long talked of and delayed; and he sometimes pleased himself with thinking, that in his sister's family, he might still find some one to love and cherish.

But to go back to the motives which had influenced his life. The truth was, that the worthy doctor, like many others, after a few years' residence in the country had lost the ardent desire to return to his birthplace, which at first tormented him — which he always expressed, and fancied that he still felt—years had brought new connexions and new friendships, and though they never occupied in his heart the place of those he had left round his father's hearth-stone, yet they exercised his kindly affections, and diminished the feeling of loneliness and isolation which every one, possessed of the least sen-

sibility must experience, on making a solitary entry into life in a strange land.

Youth is slow to reason but quick to feel, and he, who had been accustomed to find himself a first object—a central point at Fernbraes—felt wonder and mortification, on his first arrival, on discovering how small a space he occupied in Indian society. His local consequence had quite left him—he was no longer the heir apparent—"the young laird"—nothing more than Mr. Assistant-surgeon M'Alpin; the peculiarity of whose Gaelic idiom and national predilections, were his most marked claims to notice. Then he sighed to return; but time, which changes all things where there is any material to work upon (and, in his case, nature had done her part), changed the raw Highland lad into the able and experienced physician; unremitting in his duty, indefatigable in his exertions for the wellbeing of those under his care, and as attentive to the lowest native as to those whose life was favour, and whose health was for-

tune to him; and it also changed his situation from assistant-surgeon, tossing about with a corps, to that of "residency-surgeon" at Lucknow. His professional abilities procured him fortune—his intrinsic worth secured him friends—acquaintance with the world softened his extravagant prejudices; only leaving just enough of national peculiarity, to give some spirited touches to his character, and preserve his individuality.

The kindness of his heart, and perhaps some tincture of his feudal feelings, extended to his numerous household; over whom he ruled with patriarchal sway, having bondmen and bondwomen born in his house. His servants rarely wished to leave him, and he seldom discharged them; so that, to use their own phrase, "their children's children eat of his salt, and dwelt in the shadow of his protection." When delinquencies were committed, they knew "that the sahib's heart was tender;" and when his anger had expended itself, "sweet words," and a list of those who depended upon their exertions, and must suffer along with them, "would

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set all right;" and the good doctor, though perhaps he would not like to have had any one make the comparison, enjoyed something of the satisfaction amongst his black retainers at Lucknow, which he expected amongst those of his own colour at Fernbraes; and he had also the satisfaction whenever any thing went wrong, to attribute the annoyance, whatever it might be, to "this vile country;" and to be certain that in his own he would be exempt from it. Roguery and ingratitude were never heard of there, at least he never recollected to have met with them.

When he indulged in such excesses of enthusiasm, which were apt to break out on the receipt of letters from Europe, or of new books from the "modern Athens," Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow, with whom most of his evenings were passed, never omitted bringing to his memory a little history of whisky-punch, which he would rather have forgotten.

"There are many things you know, doctor," Mrs. Cheapstow used to say, "which

are better in memory than in reality; the strength remains when the harshness is gone. I used to think, from your description that goat-milk cheese was a very fine thing, until I saw the biting, moulded, blue reality, which was sent to you from Fernbraes; looking as venerable as if it had come out of Herculaneum."

"And the Highland nectar, doctor, which you promised us," said the colonel; "do you recollect what execrable stuff it proved; and what a headach you got by persisting to drink two or three glasses of it; and how in the morning you were fairly driven to confess, that it had not just the relish it used to have at Fernbraes, and that for 'this vile country,' claret when it was well cooled, was a more suitable beverage?"

"There is no use in recollecting things that would be better forgotten," said the doctor, laughing, "and constantly keeping one in mind of one's degeneracy."

The doctor had thus staid from year to year, grumbling, and increasing his fortune,

until he had passed what has been popularly called middle life, that is to say fifty, or in more polite phrase, that period which a French courtier out of respect for the feelings of his monarch, who had lived half a century, and yet did not like to be thought older than other people, declared to be, *l'age de tout le monde*, and he found that his hair had worn high off his temples, and had changed its originally yellow tint for white. The change in colour, however, was not very perceptible, as in conformity to the military etiquette of his day, he still continued to wear powder. His regular and well-proportioned features had become thin and pale, though his light gray eye still retained some of the penetrating earnestness of former years, particularly when his enthusiasm was excited, or the nervous irritability which climate had ingrafted on his naturally acute feelings was called into action.

The world laughs at enthusiasm in any age, though in youth it sometimes meets with toleration, as one of the follies which

time will correct: but notwithstanding the general voice against it, observation proves, that it is the high spring-tide of feeling which carries the mind forward over all obstacles; and, under the curb of reason, leads to excellence — at least, the good doctor thought so; and perfectly agreed with the philosopher who has defined enthusiasm to be "a transport of the mind, whereby it is led to think and imagine things in a sublime, surprising, and yet probable manner." His thin, tall figure retained its original rectitude of line, though a fall and pliancy in the shoulders, showed that there also climate had done its work.

"He was," as he said himself, "compounded of excellent bone and capital muscle; though certainly a little relaxed by the fiery furnace, in which he had been tried for such a length of time."

However, he trusted the good sharp breezes, would set all that to rights again, and make a new man of him.

When not on duty, or occasions of cere-

mony, his unvarying dress was his white nankeen jacket, waistcoat, and trousers, shoes of the same material, and a light broad-brimmed solar hat, covered with white muslin; so that in his whole dress he had not one coloured speck, and if his clothes were not as remarkable for the tightness of their fit as if they had been cut in Bond-street, they were at least very much so for the snow-like purity of their tint. The like taste displayed itself through his whole dwelling; for though he covered his tables and couches with the books he was reading, or might read, he never suffered this negligence on his own part, to be an excuse for his servants permitting the least particle of dust to harbour amongst them; and though he liked his dogs to run about through his apartments, it was not until his dooriah* had performed their ablutions.

In this way the doctor had sailed down the stream of time in all the independent ease and quiet uniformity of a bachelor's life at Lucknow; and had become so at-

* Dooriah—dogkeeper.

tached to the persons and things about him, that when after his departure for Europe was fixed, he visited his friends for the last time, he could not bring himself to say "farewell;" and left them under the idea that they should see him again. Most of his servants accompanied him to Calcutta, and thus continuing to him for a little longer, the satisfaction of being surrounded by the faces he was accustomed to see.

Dr. M'Alpin, like many others when they have almost attained the summit of their wishes, felt rather sorrow than joy in the prospect of the near accomplishment of his desire. He had been in the habit for thirty years of attributing every evil and annoyance he had met with, to this "vile country;" but now that he was upon the point of leaving it for ever, he thought of the long years of ease and independence he had enjoyed, passed in social and friendly intercourse with many whom he could never hope to see again; he thought of those whom death had separated from him, and retraced in his

mind the lapse of years, by the number of gaps it had made in the list of those who had started with him in the career of fortune. This depressing state of feeling, led him back to the changes which had taken place in that home to which he was going.

"I wonder if they will know me," he said, as he walked up and examined his own face in the mirror. "I wonder if they will know the rosy-cheeked, curly-headed, active lad, who left them in the pride of youth and expectation; in the pale face, sunk eyes, and bald forehead which I see before me; and yet I fear that I am more changed in mind than I am in body. I cannot deny to myself, that no one can be expected to have patience with my nervous and irritable habits of life, but Cussim Ali, who kens them so well; but alas!" he continued, perusing every line of his own features in the glass, as if he saw them for the first time, "Who is there to recollect me? They are all gone! and the young ones who are now in their places, are after my day.

He turned his back upon the mirror, and walked up and down the room ;—his eye fell upon a volume of picturesque views in Scotland, which had been amongst his first purchases on arriving in India. "It is my native land," he said aloud, "and wherever a Scotchman passes his life, he ought to return to lay his bones there."

"Sahib,"* said Cussim Ali, who had been waiting quietly, and took the doctor's soliloquy for an order, "your slave waits, what is the sahib's order?"

"I have no order, Cussim," answered his master, "but do not forget that the sircar† gets warm clothes, and every thing fit for you to go on board ship, since you have made up your mind to go with me."

"Yes, sahib, it is my nisib‡ to cross the sea. I have eaten your salt, for many years, and now that I have lost all, and that no one of my house remains—not a son to lay

* Sahib—sir, gentleman.

† Sircar—native accountant. ‡ Nisib—fate.

my head in the earth," and a tear strayed over the old man's face, and down his white beard, which he wiped away with his long sleeve, "I shall go with you, sahib, who is my father and my mother; and when I die, you will put me in the ground, and not leave me to have the burial of a dog."

"Make yourself easy, Cussim Ali," replied the doctor, "if that happens, every thing shall be done properly."

"Good, sahib, very good, I go with you."

Cussim and his master had borne the heat and burden of the day together, and though warm attachment is not certainly the characteristic of native character, yet it is to be found; and amidst the general apathy and heartlessness, which must be more or less the consequence of servitude, examples of true affection may be met with.

Possibly masters in all countries are too apt to forget, that the affections of the human heart cannot be bought,—that sim-

ple justice cannot purchase love, and that nothing short of affection can create affection. Mere attention, which is bestowed equally upon the comfort of servants and cattle, cannot excite gratitude.

CHAPTER II.

Five-and-twenty years ago—
Alas how time escapes! 'tis even so—
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet
And always friendly we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour.
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days)
"Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!"

COWPER.

ARRIVED at Calcutta, Dr. M'Alpin's boats anchored off the Old Fort Ghaut, just behind the house of his friend Mr. Curzon, with whom he meant to take up his residence until his departure for Europe. They had arrived in the country in the same fleet, and though they had not met for years, had

always maintained a friendly correspondence.

The doctor's spirits which had been depressed by his parting with his friends, Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow at Lucknow, were greatly cheered by this meeting with his old friend Curzon. His gray eyes twinkled as he shook hands with him, and each for a moment regarded the changes which time had made on the other. "I have not enjoyed so much satisfaction since I left Lucknow," said the doctor with an affectionate smile; "the sight of a friend's countenance, Curzon, is the best remedy for the evils of life. Ye have done more for me in five minutes, than all my reasoning and all my philosophy on board the boat, was able to effect in a whole fortnight."

"Our satisfaction is equal M'Alpin; the time is come when neither you nor I can set about making new friends, and of consequence, we doubly value those who are left to us. Few, very few of those who came out with us, are in existence now; and the

young men of the present day are of a different stamp," answered Mr. Curzon.

A composed and gentle expression sat on his open brow, he spoke in a low articulate tone, which perfectly suited the general character of his appearance, and his tall thin figure, with long legs and hanging arms, was one often seen amongst those whose nervous system has been shaken by a long residence in an undermining climate.

The two friends spent the first evening of their meeting in mutual questions relative to their own affairs, and those who had been, or still were, the friends of both parties. As there was no company they dined above, in the drawing-room, where the air circulated more freely than on the ground-floor.

When dinner was over, they had their chairs and hookahs placed in the verandah which overlooked the square, and enjoyed the little cool air which came off the great tank in the centre, always kept fresh and full by communication with the river. The shrubs and flowers which bound the broad

gravel without the enclosure round the tank had a pleasing effect in the light of a clear sweet night. The open windows of every well-lighted house round the square, added much to the cheerfulness of the scene, and smoking their hookahs as they sipped their wine, they spoke with the unreserve of those who felt that their thoughts and their feelings were matter of interest to each other.

"You," said Mr. Curzon, "have the near prospect of visiting your native land—I never shall."

"And why not, what prevents ye, if ye wish it?"

"Money—money, I have expended so much in the prosecution of my researches in Asiatic literature that I shall never be able to quit the country."

"But with your allowances how is that possible?"

"You forget, the monthly expense of learned natives transcribing for me, has been a fortune of itself. I can show you any day

you please my college in this house. You know I must have them to do the drudgery for me, even if our climate was a different one. How many men did our English Johnson employ in transcribing for his great work?"

"Doubtless that is a heavy expense, but your library is a mine of itself."

"Yes, if you consider the sums sunk there. It was impossible for me to prosecute some of my works without the purchase of an immense number, sometimes of all the manuscript copies of a particular author I might want, at any price which might be demanded for them by natives who understand their own interest too well not to make the most of it. They know that I must have the thing, therefore never scruple to make me pay for it. You know the uncertainty of a written character in a country so extensive as this, where men of learning have chosen to make variations, not only in the character, but in its signification, the

truth of which it is impossible to ascertain, without an accurate comparison of their different works."

"I know that from my own experience," answered the doctor. "Though without any pretensions to be a scholar, I know something of the Persian poets; and I know too, that book-making is not the lucrative trade in this country, that it is in our own."

"Ours may be called a labour of love, as it produces neither money nor fame. How many men of talent in India have spent their lives in the prosecution of knowledge and oriental learning, and have dropped into the grave without one word of record or of praise! The literary labours of men in Europe have little in common with us; in this distant field the pursuit of oriental literature cuts a man off from the correspondence of the *savans* of our own country, as also from the hope of fame or emolument. Those who have laboured to clear a path through the intricacies of the various languages of the East, who have at an enormous sacrifice

of private fortune, health and even life, toiled to provide the means of profitable study, are forgotten. I believe I may venture to say, without fear of contradiction, that the most useful works in all the different branches of oriental literature, Hindoo and Mahommedan law not excepted, are from the pens of Europeans, many of them acknowledged by the learned natives to excel in accuracy and extent the works of their own scholars."

"It is a hard, though I fear a true statement," answered the doctor.

"Steady prosecution of a worthy object is undoubtedly a pleasure amidst all the toil and discouragements, which may attend it; and we have the satisfaction to think, that our labours have not been in vain, in the main object. We have not only laboured usefully in opening their literary stores to the natives themselves, but in providing tools to carry on the work. We have helped them to the fixed standard of a pointed language, or I should rather say languages,—for, what we have done in one, we have done in many

—I am not so enthusiastic as to believe, that spreading knowledge over a country like India can be speedily accomplished; but we have made the natives feel the superiority of printed books, over their inaccurate and expensive manuscripts; we have put knowledge within the reach of those who are not rich, we have even shown them a way to better their fortunes, while they benefit their country;—and those whose names are unknown amongst the *literati* of Europe, and whose bones are mouldering in the dust, will yet be recognised by the natives of this country, as benefactors, whose deeds shall live after them."

"I wish," said the doctor, warmly, "that there was any one willing and able to give the world a faithful record of the services of those whose talents have never been estimated but by a few literary friends, and two or three well-informed natives; and I wish that ye would just part with your Moonshies,*

* Moonshie—Hindostance teacher.

and Mollahs,* and Pundits† at once, and before many years go about I might have the satisfaction to see you in the Land o'Cakes, where I think ye have not yet been."

"It will not do, my good friend, the day is too far spent for me now to alter my plan;" if I did 'resolve,' it would be, but to 'resolve and die the same.' I could not remodel my habits if I would. I never was fond of money, perhaps I should say careful of it; though at the same time I may say that I have never gone beyond my allowances. I have lived all my life in ease, and supported the dignity of my station in the eyes of the natives, which I certainly think is a duty every man owes to his country as well as to himself. I might, certainly, by rigid economy amass a little money even now, out of my ample receipts, but what would it signify? With a little I could not do in Europe what I have been accustomed to do here. I am

* Mollah—learned Persian.

† Pundit—learned Hindoo.

too old to begin life anew, so shall just jog on in the ease and abundance I have ever enjoyed, until I quit the stage, without changing the scene. If I had been fortunately married, if I had a family to expect me, I could make an exertion for them; but I have none dependant upon me, therefore am at liberty *to walk on* my own way."

"Yes, all that may be unfortunately true for you and me, still every Briton, wherever he spends his life, likes to close his eyes in his own land; and though it is not the lot of many, it is the prospect we all look to," answered the doctor.

"And there is reason and just feeling in the sentiment," said Mr. Curzon, "and had I my life to go over again, I would keep it in view; as it is, I am too much a citizen of the world to sacrifice the comfort of the remaining years of my life, for the satisfaction of lying by my ancestors."

Mr. Curzon was in his habits of life, sentiments, and feelings exactly an "Old Indian"—what the youths of that time called

a " regular Qui Hie." The quiet unobtrusive kindness of his manners, bore a stamp of the climate by which they had been formed —a climate which disposes people to think and to order for the comfort of their friends, rather than to make personal exertion; liberal, gentlemanly, and friendly, unwilling to impose restraint upon others, or to submit to it himself, he received his friends into his family with sincere pleasure; but did not constrain them or himself by altering in the smallest particular his usual habits of life. He rarely made his appearance amongst them, from breakfast until the hour of driving in the evening; as the time not spent in public business was given to his literary pursuits.

Dr. M'Alpin and he sat up until the extinction of the lights in the lower rooms round the square, and the glimmering of the night lamps in the upper chambers warned them that the world had retired to rest; a fact to which the " burning out," of their own cocoa-nut oil wall-shades, and the loud

snoring of their bearers waiting in the outer rooms, bore testimony.

After breakfast next morning, the doctor's first care was to take the necessary steps for securing his passage; but after going in his palanquin all over Calcutta, to the Exchange, and the Cooly Bazaar, he had not been able to arrange any thing to his satisfaction.

The "Lady Juliana" had very fine accommodation, but Captain Seabreeze was generally supposed "to sail too near the wind,"—that is to say, kept a miserable table; so that the doctor, to whom good fare was not altogether indifferent, and who could not have contented himself with exactly the same cheer as when he came out, found it needless to inquire further. Though in his medical capacity he sometimes descanted upon the advantage of spare living, he was not over-fond of reducing the thing to practice, at least for four or five months upon a stretch. The doctor perfectly well knew the difference between prescribing and taking prescriptions,—not that we wish to insinuate

that our worthy friend was either a gourmand or an epicure; nor yet that happy compound of both, which men sometimes like even to affect, as a proof that they have lived where such things are to be learnt.

— The "Carlisle Castle" was unexceptionable, but she was full. A lack and twenty thousand rupees in passage-money— the "Patriot" was a fine ship, and had an excellent table, but Captain Ropesend was a tyrant, not only amongst his ship's company, but his passengers; and no one would sail with him, but those who could not do better.

When the doctor represented all this to Mr. Curzon in the evening, as they were walking in the veranda, until the phaeton for their evening drive was brought to the door, Mr. Curzon told him that he expected a captain of an Indiaman to dine with him that night, who could perhaps accommodate him, or at all events give him useful information.

"I dinna want to wait for the last ships of the season," said the doctor; "if we

have foul weather off the Cape, or a long voyage, I should not be able to get to Scotland this winter, and that would not do for me, though I have written to my niece, who is my name daughter, to be at Fernbraes to meet me."

"I do not know when the 'Snowden' sails, but Captain Landless will be able to tell you. I wish, since you are to go, that you may go with him. A better seaman never trod the deck; he is not one of those who have two characters, one for sea, and another for shore. As you see him to-night, you will always find him if you sail with him. Have you any objection to go with me to Fort William," continued Mr. Curzon. "I wish to inquire about a youth who has brought me a letter of introduction, from England. Foolish boy, he ought to have delivered it himself. Afterwards I can show you some of the changes, which have taken place since we landed."

"With all my heart, I desire nothing better," said the doctor, who preceded his

friend down stairs. When they were both seated in the high phaeton, which Mr. Curzon liked because it carried them out of the dust, he called to his sirdar* bearer, to bring the letter which he had left open on his dressing-table, as there was neither card or address sent with it, and he wanted it for the name. They drove down "the Cowtse," which, as they were out half-an-hour before the usual time, was only occupied by a battalion of bhisties,† marching ten or twelve feet abreast, in the act of watering it from the necks of their bhisty-bags, formed of the skins of small bullocks, and slung over the right shoulder, in a way when filled out with water, very much to resemble the animal from which they were taken.

Our friends entered the fort by the Chowringhee gateway, and drove straight through it, past the European parade, and governor's house, usually occupied by the adjutant-general of the king's troops, to the south

* Sirdar—head bearer. † Bhisty—water-carrier.

barracks, where Mr. Curzon knew he would most probably find the newly-arrived cadets. He asked the first sentry he met, for the quarters of "Cadet Morton Sahib," without receiving a satisfactory answer, but on making him comprehend that it was one of the "little new come gentlemen" he wanted, the sentry directed him to the further end of the barracks, saying, "all the little gentlemen are there."

Mr. Curzon threw the reins to one of his sices,* and with the doctor walked up stairs into a long passage which extends through the centre, from one end of the barracks to the other, having staircases and entrances at both ends. Into this passage all the apartments on both sides open, and Mr. Curzon seeing a young gentleman coming out of one of them, went forward to him, and begged to be directed to that occupied by Mr. Morton.

"Mr. Morton, sir!" said the youth in

* Sice—groom.

an accent of surprise. "You do not mean young Morton who came out with us?"

"The same, sir, I suppose," answered Mr. Curzon. "I seek Mr. Morton who left England with the June fleet."

"He was in that room," pointing across the passage, "but I am sorry to tell you sir," he went on after a little hesitation, "he died last night, and was buried this morning."

The doctor, who had not taken part in the conversation, now came anxiously forward.

"Impossible!" answered Mr. Curzon, "there must be some mistake, I had a letter of introduction brought by the Morton I mean, delivered this afternoon."

"I can explain that circumstance, sir, if you will walk into my room." He turned the lock which was in his hand, and both gentlemen entered with him. The youth placed two chairs, all his quarters afforded, but his guests were too painfully interested to occupy them.

"But the letter?" asked Mr. Curzon.

"After all was over this morning, at six o'clock, poor Morton's desk was opened by the barrack-master, in the presence of the proper people; a number of sealed letters were found in it, which were sent according to the addresses, and I suppose sir, yours was one of the number."

"Why was it not sent before? When did you arrive?" asked Mr. Curzon.

"We have been here a week this day," returned the youth.

"How unfortunate that I did not sooner receive that letter. This untimely catastrophe might have been prevented," said Mr. Curzon.

"You knew the young man, sir," inquired the doctor, "what was his illness, and what brought it on?"

"The sun they said, sir; he had been ill the whole night before any of us knew, indeed I only discovered it the day before yesterday, when I went into his room by chance. There was but a bearer with him

in the night who could not speak a word of English, nor we of Hindostanee. It was the middle of the day when I went to him, and found him very ill in bed and very hot, with the sun shining in upon him, which the doctor afterwards said was bad. He complained of thirst, and I gave him Madeira and water, as much as he could drink.

The two gentlemen who were eagerly listening to this recital, exchanged a glance, but it would have been cruel, because unavailing, in such circumstances, to have told the speaker of the mischief he had done—they let him proceed.

"Though he was certainly very ill, I did not know that there was the least danger. I had never been with sick people, and I did not know that young men could die without being long ill first."

"Poor boy!" said Mr. Curzon.

"Poor boy," said the doctor, "his life has been the sacrifice of inexperience and want of attention. But when did medical assistance come?"

"That I cannot precisely say, sir. I staid with him until tiffin, and finding that he could not eat any thing, and had become extremely restless and uneasy, I was fortunate enough to meet with a man who spoke a little English, and directed me to the doctor's quarters. When I got there I made out, as well as I could understand his people, that he had gone over the plain to the general hospital, and I went into his house and wrote a note, which I desired them to take to him as I was obliged to be in town on business at a precise hour, and I never thought that there was any thing more the matter with Morton than a little heat from being too much in the sun the day before. I was detained to dinner by the captain we came out with, and when I came back here at night I found the garrison surgeon, but he told me that there was no need for him to stay longer, that he could be of no use. I was greatly shocked and surprised, and I tried to persuade him to stay; but he said he had other business to do, and as he could do nothing

for him, there was no necessity for his staying to see a man die. I remained by poor Morton, who was quite delirious, until he breathed his last, and I do not think I ever suffered so much in my life before."

"I believe it, my young friend, I believe it," said Dr. M'Alpin. "I wish I had been with you four-and-twenty hours sooner, and it might have been spared."

"It is doubly distressing to me," said Mr. Curzon, "poor boy, he was recommended to my care by an old friend, and had the letter been delivered he would have been in my house, and this might not have happened—but why were the letters not sent?"

"To confess the truth, sir, we all acted foolishly in that respect. One of the cadets who came before us, told us that it would be of no use. He gave us a history of the receptions he had met with, and out of nineteen letters which he presented, he never had but one invitation to a great dinner, where hardly any one spoke a word to him, or took any more notice of him than if he had

not been present,—and we were foolish enough, sir, to be guided by his advice, and some of us tore our letters, and others resolved never to deliver them."

"And the cadet who gave you this advice," inquired Mr. Curzon, "may I ask what sort of education and manners he possesses?"

"To say the truth, sir, not much of either. He is rather a rough fellow, just from school."

"There it is," answered Mr. Curzon. "I thought there must be something in himself, since he met with general neglect. A youth such as you describe could not be a desirable addition to any family. Depend upon it, that when people in this country have reason to complain of hospitality, the fault is generally in themselves."

"Experience is a stern master, my young friend," said Dr. M'Alpin, "and I hope he has taught you not to set lightly by the care and trouble of your kind parents another time, and not to destroy, for the opinion of an ignorant youngster, what has cost them,

it may be, trouble to procure, and what they laid stress upon as being of service to you when you were out of their sight."

The boy blushed, and the doctor continued kindly, "I did not mean to scold you young man, but take my advice," and he offered his hand, which the other took with cordiality, "and dinna reject acquaintance with those who have more years on their shoulders, and more experience to guide them."

"What has passed, shows me that we have done wrong," said the boy with manly frankness, which pleased both gentlemen, well knowing the difficulty those of his age usually have in confessing an error, and the pride they too often feel in rather standing by the consequences of their own free-will actions, than submitting to correct them by the opinion of those whom they too often suppose to have lost the fire of youth, and the pride of independence.

"It will give me pleasure, sir," said Mr. Curzon—"may I request your name?"

"Ouseley, sir—Charles Ouseley."

"It will give me pleasure, Mr. Ouseley, if you will make my house your home, while you remain at the presidency."

"I am exceedingly obliged, sir, nothing could give me greater pleasure—but I do not know if I am permitted to be absent from the fort."

"I shall settle all that for you. I'll put you in the way of transacting the matter according to rule.—Have you any conveyance?"

"Yes, sir, I have a horse; the first thing I did was to buy a horse."

"Then I shall leave one of my sices to conduct you to my house. Here is my card, you cannot miss your way. Do you know Tank Square? But stay—I had forgotten your baggage."

He looked round the apartment which contained a small wicker-bottomed cot (without musquito curtains), furnished with a mattress and pillows, covered with a sheet and Madras palampore. A camp table of two leaves on folding stand, on

which was a uniform jacket, just come home from the tailor; scarlet cloth; gold epaulets; silk stockings, which seemed to have been rummaged out of their European packing cases; ink in a coffee-cup, wafers in a pill-box, pens and paper. Trunks placed upon each other, were made to perform the office of a dressing-table, by which stood a large brass chillumchee,* and black earthen goglet. Four chairs completed the furniture, one of which was occupied by a saddle, and the other by sundry pairs of boots and shoes, leaving only two disposable.

A regulation sword hung from one of the nooks for wall shades on the wall; a shot-bag and pistols occupied two more; and from the fourth depended a kind of flat fishing-basket, out of which projected a flute and some torn music. The floor was littered with the usual store of useless, nameless, indescribable trumpery, which is so often furnished to young gentlemen as indispensable, and which after costing a large

* Chillumchee—large basin.

sum to their parents, leaves them on their arrival in want of every serviceable article.

"Have you any trustworthy servant? but it is impossible you can have," said Mr. Curzon, recollecting himself. "If you will put up those things," looking at the mass upon the table, "I shall order proper people to be sent to carry them to my house."

"I cannot think of giving you that trouble, sir; I have a very good useful servant who speaks English, and whom I can get to understand me—but here he is."

A dirty, disorderly-looking kitmutgar,* while his master was speaking came into the room with his shoes on his feet; he, however, instantly returned and left them at the door, when he perceived that his master's guests were not "*new little Sahibs.*" He had on his head a soiled pink cotton turban, placed on one side; his thick coarse black hair hung from the crown of his head, and was cut straight across the back of his neck; his white cotton coat and trousers, were

* Kitmutgar—servant who waits at table.

both coarse and ragged, and his sash was of common coarse cloth, dyed orange. His large hooked-nose and thick bushy black eyebrows, gave his face altogether the appearance of roguery and assurance which characterizes the knavish and dissipated race of mussulmans, well known in Calcutta by the name of "king's officer's servants;" that is to say the entirely worthless part of the community, who take casual service with officers belonging to the ships and European regiments, resolved to make the most of their short time, and commonly ending by robbing their masters on the eve of departure.

"Call my servant," said Mr. Curzon to the kitmutgar.

"It is done, sahib," and he left the room.

"That fellow would never do," continued Mr. Curzon. "You would lose your baggage, Mr. Ouseley, if you trusted it out of your sight in his care."

"Your sircar furnished you with that scoundrel?" said the doctor.

"Yes, sir; but I have never had any reason to complain of him."

"No! though he came into the room where you were with his shoes on. If he had not quickly got rid of them, I should have pitched him out of that window for his insolence. Heard ever any body of a footman in our country coming into a room with a hat on his head, or a decent mussulman with his shoes on his feet?"

"It is not," said Mr. Curzon, seeing that Mr. Ouseley did not understand, what could so highly have excited the doctor's wrath, "It is not the mere circumstance of a man's coming into a room with his shoes on, that is the cause of offence, but the intention with which it is done. He knows perfectly well that he is putting upon you the greatest affront that a servant can offer to his master, and taking a liberty which he dare not with the lowest native. I mention this, because it is proper that Europeans should know what natives consider as respectful and disrespectful; they seldom fail in their

duties in that way when they see that we know what they ought to do; and, indeed, respectable servants never do so at any time."

"You will think I am giving you a hard lesson, Mr. Ouseley," joined the doctor; "but in this country, when you choose a new servant, always choose a clean and well-dressed man. Gambling and drunkenness are almost always the cause of dirt and rags. A proper man has too much self-respect ever to be seen without proper covering."

Mr. Curzon told his new acquaintance that he would expect him to dinner at half-past seven, in the mean time he promised to send one of his own chaprasseys* to see that the baggage was properly taken care of, and left him for the present.

* Chaprassey—running footman.

CHAPTER III.

Alas! how changed the times to come!
Their royal name low in the dust!
Their hapless race wild wandering roam
Though rigid law, cries out 't was just!

When Mr. Curzon and Dr. M'Alpin were reseated in the phaeton, the conversation naturally turned upon the lamentable event which had just come to their knowledge.

"It is much to be regretted," said Mr. Curzon, "that parents at home generally know little of how their sons are situated when they come to this country. Here is another instance amongst the many I have met with, of these poor boys falling a sacrifice to their own inexperience; and the

climate gets the whole credit, when only half is due. Yet what can be done to prevent it? A man's fate must always be in a measure in his own hands, the anxiety of parents, or the providence of the legislature, cannot make provision against the thoughtlessness and presumption of their years. It is almost impossible to keep a great schoolboy, wearied with having nothing to do, and often unprovided with any rational pursuit, within doors for a whole long day."

"Ay, ay," answered the doctor, "people at home often think that if a youth is idle and expensive, and will not settle to any business, he will do well enough for India. And if the truth were known, man or woman need to have industry that no longer will relax, and courage that no climate will subdue, to do any good here. Oh, if they would but consider what a young man is to do with himself, from five in the morning, his parade time, until six in the evening, when he may go out with safety, or how is he to pass over so many dull hot hours, in quarters by

himself, without getting into one folly or another, they would take more pains than they sometimes do to fit them for the scene they are to act in; and instead of sending those that have little education, they would at least strive to give every one some fixed pursuit. Health is compounded of many things, and amongst them the employment of the mind, Curzon, is not the least important."

"These ideas are too philosophic to be generally acted upon, in our expensive country; friends are glad to find a situation fit for a younger son, without too scrupulously considering whether he be fit for it. Every man sent to this country is provided for, the service is sure, he rises if he lives, and if he does not, he does not require it. It may be, that many letters are presented which are but of little use to the bearers; but when that is the case it may be traced with few exceptions, I fancy, to the way in which they are procured and the manners of the youth who delivers them. Friends and

parents at home, ask letters from those with whom they have little acquaintance, and send raw, uneducated schoolboys to present them, who in many cases cannot be pleasant guests in any house; so that, perhaps, the formal invitation to dine, which young Ouseley mentioned, or the general invitation to come at any time, which is only understood by those acquainted with the manners of the country, is all the fruit of it. The climate, the occupations of the day, languor of mind, the concomitant of both, and the driving-hour, being generally all that men in public life have for the enjoyment of family intercourse, prevent them taking the trouble of going to see how these poor boys get on in the Fort, and their situation is often deplorable when they are left to themselves."

"Yes," said the doctor, "and like this poor boy, they often make quick work of it. You will find fifty, ay a hundred deaths amongst the cadets, for one amongst the young ladies; and the reason is, that the last

are under the advice and direction of others, while the first are left to their own. They run about in the heat of the day, all over the place, drink Madeira and water, try their dogs and horses in the sun, and a thousand follies of the same kind. A man need have a constitution of iron to go through with it. There is many a dear bargain in this world, Curzon, but experience is the dearest of all. We most of us act first, and think how we ought to have done afterwards; and seldom, very seldom, any experience can serve us, but that which we have purchased for ourselves. We may give our heirs all that we possess in the world, but we can never give them our experience."

Mr. Curzon had staid so long in the Fort, that he had not time, even if he had inclination to show his friends the changes he had talked of. They were both too much accustomed to the striking events brought forward by a resistless climate, to feel that which had just passed, as they would have done years before; still it was of a nature

which made a solitary drive the most agreeable, and they took the Raussipuglah road, which brought a change of a different kind before them. Mr. Curzon pointed out to his friend several houses at no great distance from each other, some of them handsome, and others indifferent, the abodes of the Mysore princes.

"There," he said, "dwell the family of Tippoo Sultan; they have been here ever since the capture of Seringapatam. At the time they came, there was an allowance assigned for the support of each, five thousand rupees a month I believe, which it has been the policy of the company not to increase, with their increasing families. There are now only two of Tippoo's sons in life, but their descendants have multiplied to such a number, that they must soon either starve, or seek service in Calcutta. It is difficult to find employment for Mussulmans of their rank when the sword is forbidden."

"The sins of the fathers have been visited upon the children here," said the doctor.

If Hyder Ally usurped the throne of his benefactor, they have suffered for it root and branch; we might grieve for the overturn of a royal house, if we did not know, that some of these poor creatures are better here than if their family still filled the Musnud* of the Mysore. You know as well as I do, that in Mussulman courts the other brothers are almost always sacrificed to him who by his father's caprice, or his own boldness, is placed on the throne; and if their eyes are not put out, they are fed on opium until they take their departure more quietly. I know enough of those things."

"The Hindoo law of inheritance has certainly much the advantage over Mahomet's, and does not leave a whole family at the mercy of a jealous tyrant, who commonly adopts the maxim, that 'his throne stands most secure, when its feet are wet in blood.'"

"Ay, ay," returned the doctor, "cruelty and profligacy often go together. I have

* Musnud—throne.

remarked that when pleasure is the business of life, cruelty becomes its amusement. The mind sunk and exhausted by excess, can only be stimulated by sights of blood and suffering."

It had become almost dark before Mr. Curzon turned his horses' heads to retrace his steps; when they reached his own house, he found that his new acquaintance Mr. Ouseley and Captain Landless were in the drawing-room. After having introduced his friend Dr. M'Alpin to the latter, he good-naturedly entered into conversation with his young guest, who in the pride and pleasure of finding himself in his new uniform for the first time, had already forgotten whatever had distressed him. Notwithstanding the mobility of his temper, Mr. Curzon agreed in thought to what the doctor had already observed, that "there was making in him, when a few more years had gone over his head." He had not then completed his sixteenth year—an early age to be launched in the world, left to shape his own course,

amidst pitfalls as thick as those seen by Mirza, in his celebrated vision, at the entrance of the bridge of human life.

Mr. Curzon, in consequence of the untimely fate of the youth who had been recommended to his care, felt a double interest in one who seemed to be cast upon his protection; and after he had seriously advised him against needless exposure in the sun, and inconsiderate expense, he ended by saying, "Make yourself quite at home, here, Mr. Ouseley. You will always find breakfast on the table at seven, tiffin at one, and dinner at half-past seven, whether I am at home or not. My people will get you all the servants you require while you are here. If you wish to go out you have only to give the order, and my sirdar bearer, who is always in the house, will provide you with conveyance."

"I really do not know, sir, how to express my sense of all your goodness!"

"Well, do not try; but show it by taking care of yourself until you are sufficiently

acquainted with the country to know what you may, and what you may not do."

During this time, Dr. M'Alpin and Captain Landless had been walking in the veranda and settling their own affairs. Captain Landless was stout, not tall, with rather a short neck, ruddy cheerful countenance, and dark sharp eyes, shaded by thick black eyebrows. He spoke in a loud, decided, though not disagreeable tone of voice, which strengthened the general impression made by his manners that he was as prompt in action as resolute in time of danger. Dr. M'Alpin was prepossessed in his favour from the first moment of his introduction, and was actually disposed to be persuaded by Captain Landless to go home with him in the Snowdon, though he was to go "by the way of China."

"If a longer voyage does not make any material difference to you, sir, I would advise your going to China with me. I can give you elegant accommodation. You shall have the starboard side of the round house, and

as we sail directly, may probably be in England as soon as the ships which leave the sand-heads next month. With us you will have plenty of elbow-room, and be free from the noise of children, which, as you have none of your own, is perhaps not a pleasure to you."

"No, certainly;" answered the doctor, "give me elbow-room and quiet; but your table, captain—as you have no passengers—how stands that?"

"As my outward-bound voyage was for Bengal and China, I was full of passengers, and have abundance of stores and a good milk cow."

"That being the case, I do not see why I should not go with you, but here are the consumah's* joined hands, to say that dinner is on the table."

Before it was finished, Dr. M'Alpin had determined to take his passage in the Snowdon; and that important point settled, his first care in the morning was to push his

* Consumah—butler and house-steward.

preparations forward with all speed. At the end of a week he received a letter from Lucknow which gave him serious uneasiness; his friend Colonel Cheapstow had another attack of his old complaint, the liver, and bitterly regretted his absence from the station, and seemed to think himself not at all safe in the hands of his successor.

While the doctor was vexing himself over this letter, one of Mr. Curzon's chaprasseys came in to tell him that a musalgie* was very ill in the bottle caunah,† and that his master would be glad if he could do him any good.

The doctor went instantly to the poor creature, and found him suffering agonies from the rough treatment he had met with from a native practitioner, who had given his attendance while there was a rupee to be got, and now that he had fleeced his poor

* Musalgies—servants who clean the knives and forks, and run with lanterns before palanquins and carriages.

† Caunah—pantry; literally, a place to keep bottles.

patient to the last anna,* left him. His wrists, ankles, and temples, were strongly bound with cord, "to prevent the pulse from beating so fast," and his stomach miserably cauterized with a hot iron "to extract the heat."

Notwithstanding the state to which these remedies had reduced the sufferer, he gradually recovered under Dr. M'Alpin's care, who, as he said, often found that a little feeding did as much for the natives as medicine, particularly after they had been for several days submitted to the Sangrado system of hot water for their only nourishment, of which their own empirics are so fond.

"These fevers are the daily fruit of the grog-shops," said Mr. Curzon, when the doctor recounted to him all that had passed. "The reformers of public morals have need to look to the grog-shops; they are a nuisance of our introduction. The owners pay a rupee a day for permission to sell

* Anna—small coin, sixteenth part of a rupee.

spirits, and if they go on to license them in Calcutta, as has lately been done, we shall not have a respectable servant in our houses. Nothing corrupts our mussulman attendants like those haunts of gambling, and schools of theft. A man can procure drink for any article which he chooses to take from his master's house. We undo with one hand what we do with the other—what signify our schools if we suffer any collector to increase the revenue by such detestable means. I remember the time when there was no such thing. You will find now all round Calcutta, that wherever a gentleman's house is situated, a grog-shop starts up beyond his garden-wall to debauch his servants; and when you consider that a man can completely intoxicate himself for twopence, or perhaps half of it, it is easy to imagine what the trade must be, which enables these wretches to pay a rupee a day for their licence. I am angry with them, for they have lost me as good a servant as I ever had in my house. A young lad who had grown up with me.

I saw him change under my own eye, every day becoming drier and blacker. From being stout, well-dressed, respectful, and attentive, he grew dirty and negligent. I did not discover the cause, until it was too late to save him; he fell a victim to opium and toddy. But I had almost forgotten to ask you, if you will cross the river with me this afternoon. I have a little business with Ascot, whom I think you knew up the country."

"Yes, I remember him very well," said the doctor; "we may as well cross over to his place, as go any where else. He is married, I believe, since I saw him, and I heard his lot is not the most fortunate."

"I believe there may be something of that kind," answered Mr. Curzon; "though I really do not know. I have never seen him since I left the upper provinces. He married, I think, a country-born Dutchwoman, who, I believe, does not speak much English, and, in consequence, has fallen out of European society. They have just come

down the country, so I do not know very much about them. We may as well take young Ouseley with us."

CHAPTER IV.

Now Bell my wife, she loe's no strife,
But she would guide me e'en she can,
So to maintain an easy life,
I oft maun yield, tho' I'm gude man!

OLD SONG.

AT the usual hour in the evening the three gentlemen proceeded together in their palanquins to the Old Fort Ghaut, as had been previously determined, where their boat was in readiness. "Well, well," said the doctor, looking at the new buildings within the old walls, as he stood waiting for the dandies* to place a plank from the steps to the boat; "the ship-people will doubtless

* Dandies—boatmen.

think our new customhouse a great improvement, though the antiquarians may regret the demolition of the 'Old Fort' and the 'Black Hole;' ours is the age of reason, when nothing is sacrificed to memory."

"I thought with you, my friend," answered Mr. Curzon, "when I saw the work of destruction going on; it was, perhaps, as laborious as the original construction had been; the ramparts were of immense thickness, and so consolidated by time, that to remove them seemed like quarrying the solid rock. That memorial of our suffering is gone from the earth with the pillar which recorded it; and I must always regret the destruction of an historic monument."

The palanquins were left in waiting on the opposite bank, and as the house to which they were going stood close to the river, they ordered the boatmen to land them at Mr. Ascot's Ghaut, and walked up under the shade of the bearers chattahs.* The first view of the mansion gave them a

* Chattah—large umbrella.

perfect idea of its inhabitants. It was large and would have been handsome, had it not been quite surrounded and disfigured by a deep chopper* veranda, closed into different divisions by green cheecks,† purdahs,‡ and matting, giving it altogether a patched and ragged appearance. When they drew near they were warned what sort of inmates tenanted these compartments, by the chattering of monkeys, screaming of paroquets, boobies, minahs, &c. "Quite a native establishment," said Mr. Curzon.

"Hoot," said the doctor, "what could tempt Ascot to such a step as this!"

"Money—and if he has got it, dearly has he gained it. The father-in-law had an immense fortune, and Ascot an equally great talent for spending."

By this time they had reached the front veranda; the bearer drew up a cheeck to admit them, and they were ushered into a

* Chopper—thatched veranda.

† Cheecks—large blinds constructed of sir°

‡ Purdahs—screens.

very large hall, which extended through the centre of the house. The doors and windows were all shut round and round, and the outworks with which it was externally garnished, rendered the apartment so dark, that the visiters stood for a moment looking about before they discovered Mr. Ascot moving in the gloom to welcome them.

He took the tone of an old friend, perhaps charmed to see any one he had ever seen before come to him in his solitude. "Ah! Curzon, how do you do, and my friend from Lucknow too, I did not look to see you here." He bowed to the stranger whom Mr. Curzon presented.

" Mrs. Ascot," he called as if speaking to some one in the room, though there was no body visible—" Come here, I wish to introduce you to my friends."

No answer was returned, but they heard a sort of shuffling on the mat.

The guests had now begun to recover the use of their vision, which, dazzled by the external light, had left them upon coming

into this gloomy abode, and they could distinguish, amidst other objects, a large folding screen at the further end of the apartment, from which proceeded a scratching noise as Mr. Ascot called upon his wife; but no lady appeared.

"My wife is no great walker," he said, speaking to his visiters, "but I am sure she is here, and if she will not come to us, we must go to her."

He led the way, and sure enough in the intricacies of the screen the lady was discovered seated in a large wicker chair, in the midst of four slave girls who squatted on the floor, were at work around her. The noise proceeded from the scratching together their baskets and bundles, and as soon as the visiters appeared they rose and decamped. These poor creatures are sometimes bought by country-born families, of wandering Arabs, who, contrary to British law, hawk about unfortunate children for sale. Foreigners also, who usually prefer economy to propriety in their domestic establishments, choose slaves

in preference to native servants, as they have no caste, and are in fact servants of all work, kept at the slight expense of poor food and coarse clothing. Mrs. Ascot had hers instructed in needlework by her durzee,* and as she never did any thing in that way herself, she had the more leisure to keep them busily employed.

Mrs. Ascot seeing strangers, rose, and without courtesying bent her head, which she repeated again and again as her husband introduced her visiters, much in the manner of the Chinese porcelain figures, which continue to wave their heads backwards and forwards when they are once set in motion. This ceremony gave the guests time to remark the figure before them, which was exceedingly fat, and very dark. Her garb was a white muslin robe, made like a very large chemise, tied full round the neck, and again confined by a yellow ribbon round a waist of the largest size; short tight sleeves, which left the whole of the fat black arms, without

* Durzee—tailor.

gloves, in view. Her face was a regular oval in form, and on the whole, rather handsome. She wore her hair divided in the centre, and braided back smooth behind her ears. Whimsically placed on the top of her head was a silk cap, something between flesh and salmon colour, stuck full of silver flowers. On her feet blue silk shoes, with toes sharp as needles, showing that she drew her ornamental apparel rather from her store trunks than any modern repository. She carried a Chinese painted fan in her hand, which she waved in accordance with every movement of her head.

"I never sits in that large hall, because take cold without screen," said Mrs. Ascot to Mr. Curzon as an apology for not coming when she was called.

"Yes," joined her husband, "she sits so constantly in her own rooms with those slave-girls, that she thinks a breath of air is to kill her."

"You loves so much airs, and so much lights, and so many noise, that my poor eyes

ache, and my head ache, and I altogether ache."

"If the screaming of birds and beasts, and the infernal chattering of slave-girls and monkeys can give headachs, no one need want them in this house."

"You hear for him, Mr. Curzon, how he make scold to me, and all for my poor dumb brutes."

Both their visiters had seen and heard scenes of this kind before, therefore did not waste their sympathy upon those who seemed equally insensible of the misery or ridicule of their own situation. Mr. Ouseley, to whom the whole was perfectly new, gazed with wonder alternately upon the interlocutors, and the friends with whom he came.

"If all my torments deserved the title of dumb brutes," said Mr. Ascot, politely,—"I would have more peace in my own house. You will think mine an odd complaint, doctor—I never have company or quiet—but to state the case—my wife rises at five in the morning, but she is not out of her room till

twelve, and I have my solitary breakfast at eight, while she is in her room airing bird of paradise plumes and kincobs, and artificial flowers, and a thousand other things, of which she never makes any use, enough to set up a shop in the China bazar, and screaming with those slaves louder than the loories in the veranda."

"Things I not make any use," answered his lady reproachfully—"when you want some cloths—when children want—I go to large chest, take out—not like other ladies send to bazar—buy—buy—I take good bargain, and keep all to ready."

"Yes, for the sake of a rupee on a piece of cloth, you make me carry them all over the country, and make me pay ten times as much as they are worth. Was I not obliged to buy six more camels to carry your trumpery down here?"

"You hear to him, Mr. Curzon—a company's servant speak like a little Admy.*

* Admy—being literally, a descendant of Adam.

All great ladies plenty things get, and why not me?"

"Surely, Ascot," said Mr. Curzon, not knowing what else to say to satisfy the appellant, "you cannot expect to travel so lightly now as when you were a bachelor."

"No, certainly, with a wife, eight children, four slaves, five ayahs,* more birds and beasts than were ever in the ark, with their boxes and cages, to say nothing of bandboxes, patarrahs,† and lackered trunks, and camphor trunks, and all sorts of trunks. My wife never eats any but turkeys' eggs at breakfast, and we have coops for them to lay in fastened on the back of the camels—you may say I do not travel light!"

"But though you have eight children," said Mr. Curzon, going back to the first articles in the list of heavy baggage, "they are not all here with you, you have sent the eldest home long ago."

* Ayahs—waiting-women.

† Patarrahs—covered baskets.

"And what you call home?" inquired Mrs. Ascot. "This home for me, I not part with my children, not never."

"Persuade her to that if you can," answered her husband, "I have tried to do it until I am weary; she falls into fits whenever I propose it, though the creatures are growing up wild—Louisa is eleven years old, and can neither read nor write."

"And what signify? you know I not read—write, and you many time tell to my papa, before you make marriage to me, I much better than Europe's ladies, spends all time to read—write."

Something like a blush passed over her husband's face at this avowal. Young Ouseley could hardly smother his inclination to laughter, nor the doctor suppress his desire to tell Mr. Ascot what he thought of his whole conduct.

"You have more to do, I dare say, Mrs. Ascot, than to have time for such things," answered Mr. Curzon, willing to make an effort in a way likely to affect his hearer,

for the little sufferers, "but your children—children of their rank are always sent to England, and your boys cannot come into the service unless they have been brought up in England."

"Very well, Mr. Ascot, send boys he please, but I keep girls to me.—Rain come! rain come! Ascot, make for bearers shut down purdahs all round! my poor loories! my jacks!"

Mrs. Ascot got up as fast as she could waddle, and followed her husband, whom she sent off first as a light courier to collect the servants for the protection of the chattering multitude without, who screamed and clamoured together, as the wind overturned them and their dwellings.

"How unlucky this is!" said Mr. Curzon, as soon as Mr. and Mrs. Ascot were out of hearing, "here we shall be detained for another hour at least, it is impossible to cross the river in such weather."

"I would rather be wet to the skin, than in the hearing of such outrageous folly,"

answered the doctor, "in a place without air or light—but I will let in both, come of it what will." He opened the northern doors, and in an instant effected his purpose, the north-wester circulating a new atmosphere.

While he was standing at the door to enjoy it, a child's carriage of very large dimensions, drawn by two immense red Guzerat bullocks (with large black humps and tails), trotted up to the door, and six of the beforementioned eight children (with two or three ayahs), got out of it, and rushed into the hall, followed by two well-grown boys, who had dismounted from their ponies at the same time.

The single article of dress worn by the girls was exactly in form and shape like their mother's nondescript robe, with the exception of its only having one fastening, at the neck, from which it flowed loose. Their dingy feet without stockings were thrust into red, yellow, and green slippers of "Chinamans'" manufacture. The boys also had a single article of clothing, which con-

sisted of trousers and body in one piece, without sleeves.

When they had reconnoitred the strangers, and made a great many remarks on them in Hindostanee (though no entreaty of either Mr. Curzon or Dr. M'Alpin, could induce them to advance, or answer the questions which they were asked), they set upon Mr. Ouseley, whom they called "the little sahib," and very soon possessed themselves of his sword and sash. In the midst of the uproar their father returned, and laughed immoderately at seeing his eldest boy buckle the sword-belt round his waist, and drag the sword after him along the floor, while one of his sisters equipped in the sash, marched by his side. It was in vain that Mr. Ouseley attempted to speak to them, they did not understand one word of English.

"You will stay dinner with us?" said Mr. Ascot.

Mr. Curzon made an excuse. "We have a positive engagement."

"It is impossible to keep it—you cannot

cross in such weather. It is now late and dinner is just coming on the table."

Mr. Curzon, in pity to the family whom he saw growing up perfect natives, took the opportunity of their mother's absence to urge the necessity of sending them to Europe.

Mr. Ascot pleaded the impossibility of obtaining her consent.

"If that is the case, do not ask it; take their passage, and when the deed is done, necessity will reconcile her. You are sacrificing their wellbeing, body and mind, in every sense of the word, by keeping them here."

Mr. Ascot promised; whether he would hold that promise was another affair. He was a good-natured, indolent, unthinking man, whose first effort was to please a person whom it was impossible to please, and whose caprices and exactions only multiplied by indulgence, and whose yoke he would have thrown off, unless indolence had prevented him. He therefore took the mid-

dle course and grumbled and obeyed, always complaining of the thraldom which he had not energy or perseverance to break.

They heard the twang of a Javanese harp, and the beating of a tomtom* from Mrs. Ascot's side of the house.

"There she is," said her husband, "enjoying all the amusement she ever has any pleasure in, with the exception of the puppet-shows she often gets for the children, and delights in as much as they do. Those slaves make music enough to scare me out of the house, but their mistress has no greater enjoyment when she is resting on her couch (for she never goes out), than to hear them, unless it may be to listen to the stories they tell."

The doctor watched the weather, but there seemed no prospect of the rain abating. "Saw ye ever the like of this?" he said to Ouseley, who had joined him in the veranda. "Here is a specimen of what a man

* Tomtom—drum.

may bring himself to, that I dare say ye little dreamed of."

"Never saw any thing like it before; but why does the man suffer it?"

"Because he cannot help it. What could alter that woman? She has brought him an immense fortune, and has a right to dispose of some of it according to her own taste. Her father, as she told us, never taught her to read or write, so that in mind she is just on a par with her slaves, in whose company she seems so much to delight. I have seen in my life many a modification of her character, though not just so bad, because she seems, in addition to her want of education, naturally stupid; and though education does do a good deal, nature must have her part."

The servants had, by this time, lighted the lamps; the rain still fell in torrents, and the weather-bound visiters saw no alternative from the discomfort of the offered dinner. The consumah entered at one door to an-

nounce it, and Mrs. Ascot at another. Mr. Curzon gave his hand to the lady of the mansion, and conducted her to table exactly in the same costume as he had first the honour to see her, with the addition, however, of two rows of splendid pearls round her neck, diamond earrings in her ears, a variety of bracelets on her wrists, and rings on her fingers.

The children who had followed their mother from her apartment, advanced before the company into the dining-room, making a critical survey of every dish upon the table. One of them carried a silver hand-basin, into which one of the little boys poured the contents of a large rose-water bottle, chased in beautiful gold filigree-work.

"Oh, you rogue! my rosewater for spoil," cried his mother, not displeased that her guests should have an opportunity of seeing some of her fine possessions.

The boy paid no attention to her admo-

nitions in English or Hindostanee, but saying he was a bhisty continued to sprinkle the rose-water all round the room.

"Louisa, Louisa!" she called to the eldest girl; "you make stop your brother!"—The young lady was otherwise engaged, and took no notice of the direction.

At length, when they were seated at table, Mr. Curzon prepared to carve the roast turkey, to which Mrs. Ascot desired to be helped, as she said, "she not any soup eat but mullagatanee;" but before he could put his fork into the bird, Miss Louisa, who had been hovering about, and watching her opportunity, seized it by the neck, and, as she said, made it jump over Mr. Curzon's arm, to the infinite delight of her brothers and sisters.

Their reasonable mother threw herself back in her chair in a convulsion of laughter, and Mr. Ouseley, encouraged by her example, gave vent to the like inclination, which he had been almost dying to indulge ever since he entered the house.

"The most extraordinary thing I ever saw in my life!" said the doctor.

"Your young lady has an active spirit, Ascot; she has not lost in that way by remaining so long in the country," said Mr. Curzon.

Mr. Ascot at first broke out in a tone of indignation, but seeing his son and heir making faces over Mr. Curzon's shoulder, his short-lived anger died away in a burst of laughter.

The servants in waiting clapped their hands on their mouths to prevent an untimely explosion of their merriment, and knocked their heads together in their hurry to escape out into the veranda, where they could indulge it without offence; even the old bearer, pulling the punkah, was obliged to let the rope out of his hand with a jerk as he followed the infectious example.

The children, no doubt, greatly edified by the general mirth which they had excited, as soon as it was a little appeased, retired

in whispering consultation to plan another attack.

"I beg your pardon, Curzon," said Mr. Ascot; "I am really sorry, M'Alpin, that the bird you intended to be helped to should have flown away; but when I saw the faces that fellow was making, it was impossible for me to be angry; after all, it was but a funny trick, though we are the sufferers. Let me recommend this pillaw to you—we are famous for Hindostanee dishes in this house."

"My Louisa so droll girl—you laugh all day, Mr. Curzon, you see her tricks," said Mrs. Ascot, as the tears ran down her cheeks from the exertions she had just been making.

Mr. Ouseley's unfeigned participation with her, had recommended him very much to Mrs. Ascot's notice, and she turned to ask him what her funny children had done with his sword and sash.

"Taken them to play with, madam, I suppose."

"Oh, not sword! not sword! I so fear for sword!" and looking round the dreaded weapon was discovered lying harmless on a side table where the little pickle had thrown it, to leave him in liberty for the intended felony; "Oh, there I see them," cried the provident mother—she gave the order in Hindostanee to a servant, "Take away Ouseley Sahib's sword and hide it, until the children are gone to bed."

The order was no sooner executed, and the sword and sash had been made over to Mr. Curzon's chaprassey, who deposited them with the palanquins, which he had sent a boatman to get for his master and his guests, than the unruly troop returned to the dining-room in quest of the missing articles. Perceiving that they were not to be found, they made a second attack upon the owner. Had he understood Master William's reiterated questions, "Where is your sword?" "Where have you put your sword?" he could not have given a satisfactory answer, as their removal had passed between Mrs

Ascot and her servants. The boy then asked his father, his mother, and all the servants in turn, from whom he received the same answer—"I don't know, who knows? Perhaps some jackal has run away with it."

Fatigued with finding his efforts ineffectual, he returned to Mr. Ouseley with no better success than at first—exasperated by such unusual contradiction to his wishes, the well-bred young heir walked round to the opposite side of the table, and slily putting his hand into a dish full of gravy, he seized one half of a dressed lamb's head, and threw it with such force at Mr. Ouseley, that it hit him a blow on the breast, and covered his new uniform-jacket with gravy. Exulting in the mischief he had committed and the revenge he had taken, he fled with all speed.

Poor Mr. Ouseley coloured redder than his coat, but he suppressed his anger, and bowing to Mrs. Ascot, he begged she would excuse his rising from table, while he called the assistance of the servants in the hall.

Mr. Ascot who felt that this was too clumsy a joke, burst forth in violent anger.

"This is all your doing, Mrs. Ascot—this is your education—this is your bringing up of my children. That boy is worse than your Jacko—all your favourites become equally insupportable!"

"Who make noise now, Mr. Ascot? and all for poor senseless child's play. What he know of spoil coat? if coat spoil I scarlet cloth got, new coat can make for Ouseley Sahib."

This proposal was too much for the doctor—he could not help laughing in the midst of his wrath. Fortunately the youth for whose benefit it was made was out of hearing.

"You are enough to drive a man mad," said her husband, half rising from his chair, and sitting down again in the same instant; "but it is my fault and not yours, else you would not have the power to expose yourself and me in this manner. I do not know

what apology to make to you for the occurrences of this evening," he continued, addressing his visiters; "but you see the misery I have heaped upon my own head, and I hope will excuse them."

"Transport the culprits—send them to England," said the doctor, "and think no more about it. As Ouseley is beginning his military life he must expect harder knocks yet."

The lady, who had not the slightest idea that any thing had taken place out of the common rules of society wished to explain to Mr. Curzon all about the scarlet cloth, of which she had talked.

He saw that with her ideas upon "chutta sahibs," little gentlemen, and "burrow sahibs," great gentlemen, it would be utterly impossible to make her comprehend reason upon the subject, and he had no alternative but to tell her, that Ouseley was the son of a burrow sahib, and the coat was of no consequence.

Satisfied upon this point, all the rest ap-

peared to her of not the least importance, and she was quite assured that her guests would find the spirit of her children as entertaining as she did.

The doctor when he saw that Mr. Ascot actually suffered from the effects of his own folly, let pity overcome his anger, and talked with him on other subjects, for the time which civility obliged them to remain together.

As soon as it was possible after dinner, Mr. Curzon called for the palanquins, and took his departure; not, however, before Mrs. Ascot with many bends of the head, "hoped he would soon return to spend such another agreeable day;" and finding that the doctor had succeeded in smoothing down her ruffled husband, she extended the same invitation to him, judiciously observing,

"Another time you come, teach me, doctor, how make Mr. Ascot well when he is muggra,* and I not have no more lambs' heads when Mr. Ouseley come."

* Muggra—sulky.

"Incorrigible fool!" muttered her husband, as he walked into the veranda, calling for musalgies and lanterns.

Both the gentlemen, on parting with him, repeated their advice not to lose time in sending home his children.

When they were seated before their boat, Mr. Curzon said to his young friend, "I would have regretted having brought you here to-night and subjecting you to such impertinence, if I did not think it might be a serviceable lesson to you in your progress through life. I knew the man whose house we have just left, a gentlemanly, good kind of fellow, but idle and expensive. The consequence is what you see—he married that animal for her father's money—she has been the means of driving European society from his house; and instead of raising her, he has sunk to her level. In this country, where the climate disposes to indolence, the most deteriorating principle of our nature, which, like a cankerworm, eats to the root of every excellence in human character, a man had

need to seek all helps and appliances to boot to raise himself and to stimulate energy, rather than suffer himself, as poor Ascot has done, to fall into the dust."

"If I thought I could save those young creatures," said the doctor, "though I doubt with some of them it is too late, I would even bear the folly and vulgarity of that intolerable woman, and come back another day to see if Ascot has really kept his promise. What preserves *our* superiority of character and feeling in India, but that we are all brought up Britons? It is our proud boast, that wherever our children are born, we send them home to be educated; we give them the sentiments, and the pride, and the independence of our natural character. Whereas in all the Dutch, French, Portuguese, and other foreign settlements, they keep their children with them, and in two generations they are natives in their minds, if not in colour. We make healthy, vigorous settlements in India, carrying along with us the refinement, knowledge, and im-

provements of our mother-country; they establish colonies and dwindle into natives. You may well laugh at the idea, Ouseley, but when we took Java from the Dutch, our officers gave a ball at which the Dutch ladies appeared adorned in splendid jewels, without stockings; and a slave-girl stood behind the chair of each in the ball-room, for fear that their diamonds should be stolen out of their hair."

"A friend of mine," said Mr. Curzon, "who was present at the aforesaid ball, and who likes a joke, told me that perceiving three of the ancient circular mammas (who were quite weary of the unsubstantial entertainment of seeing their daughters dance) leave the ball-room and make their way into the supper-room to see what hope there was for them there, followed, and calling for a bottle of brandy, helped them to a glass each, by which they were so much refreshed as to be able to wait in patience for the next act."

"And at an entertainment of the same

kind in the Isle of France, after we took it from the French," rejoined the doctor, "the ladies emptied the contents of the dishes after supper into their pocket-handkerchiefs, and carried them home in their pockets because—they liked bonbons—I mention that to you, Ouseley, as a proof of what a colony becomes. Do not fancy, though, that every woman who has the misfortune to be brought up in India is exactly upon a par with the specimen we had to-day; it must be confessed that she is something beyond the common rule. *We* keep up our intercourse with home by as regular an interchange of persons and things as is carried on by the coaches to and from the metropolis of Britain to the outskirts of the kingdom. There's not a book printed in *our* country that we have not here five months after it comes from the press; whereas amongst foreigners they know no more of what is doing in France or Holland, than the inhabitants of the South Seas; unless it may be when a new functionary arrives

amongst them once in ten years,—to open their mouths in gaping wonder at the great things that have come to pass since they were last there."

CHAPTER V.

Few moments are more pleasing than those in which the mind is concerting measures for a new undertaking.
JOHNSON.

THE doctor's preparations for his voyage were now almost completed; his sea furniture was made, his trunks nearly packed, and the shawls and presents he intended for his friends at home, carefully soldered down in their tin boxes. He was seated in the midst of them, surrounded by bearers in the act of packing; his hookah in his hand, from which he drew long whiffs as he poised his chair on the back legs, his own set out on a high morah,* a large table before him

* Morah—footstool.

covered with bills, accounts current, Europe letters, &c., amongst which his sircar was rummaging for something which he at length drew out and began to read: "One list of master's necessities for Europe ship, and Sangar passage-boat.—All things for eat and drink master must take for passage-boat?" inquired the sircar.

An affirmative nod of the head desired him to go on.

"And how many servants master want for boat? Consumah—kitmutgar—bowberjee* —his mate—musalgie—bhisty—bearers?"

"Only the sirdar and his mate."

"Very well, sahib, I pay to rest, and let go — dobee† — istrie-wallah,‡ master not want—horses not want to boat, I think?"

"No, certainly."

"Hookahbardar§ must go to Sangar, master can't do without," he made a mark opposite to the man's name; "all other ser-

* Bowberjee—cook. † Dobee—washerman.
‡ Istrie-wallah—Iron-man.
§ Hookahbardar—man who dresses the hookah.

vants I think master pay up, and leave to Lucknow?"

Another affirmative nod.

The sircar prided himself not a little on his perfect knowledge of English, which he always said, "he could speak, write, like any sahib," and he stood with his ink-horn hanging from his sash, and his reed-pen sticking behind his ear, from under his turban.

"Then master please, I read to list for ship," he said.

"'One milk goat, will soon give kittens.

"'To one jar of sable fishes for Kedgeree, to master's breakfast.

"'To five hundred of pickled mangoe's fish roes.

"'To six dozen of long gentleman's stockings.

"'To Hoff's and Co.'s, humps pickled.

"'To one dozen of short gentleman's gloves.

"To making eight dozen fine-ruffled gentleman's shirts.

"'To making eight dozen gulla-bands* for dit—dit—dit.

"'To goose's puppies smoked.'"

The Durwan's† bell rung, the gate opened, a carriage entered and rolled under the portico. Two chaprasseys with silver sticks were upon the back of it; the well-known crimson and gold liveries, attracted the notice of the doctor's servants. "Our Colonel Sahib! Chipto Sahib!" screamed the whole party in concert, fluttering to the door, and salaaming to the floor before Colonel Cheapstow as he entered.

The doctor threw down his hookah, and rose to greet his friend. After mutual inquiries had passed, Colonel Cheapstow said, "You had no sooner left us at Lucknow, doctor, than I had such a smart attack of the enemy here," pressing his hand on his right side, "that Mrs. Cheapstow advised me not to lose an hour in taking my departure for Europe. You know we had in-

* Gulla—throat. Gulla-bands—neckcloths.

† Durwan—porter.

tended to have done so next year; our preparations were in part made. I pressed the rest, and we arrived in Calcutta with the ebb-tide."

"To take such accommodations as I can give you I hope," said Mr. Curzon, who caught the last sentence as he entered the room.

"With pleasure, Curzon, nothing can give me more pleasure than to spend the little time I have to be in India, under your roof. I have left Mrs. Cheapstow on board our boat, where she wishes to stay until the cool of the evening. At sunset I shall have the satisfaction of introducing her to you. I think we have not met since I became benedict."

"It is even so, Cheapstow; you may depend upon my doing all in my power to make your stay in Calcutta agreeable to your lady."

Satisfied from Colonel Cheapstow that he had benefited by the air of the river, Mr. Curzon left his friends, as business called

him, telling the doctor to take care of the colonel, and saying to her husband that he hoped for the honour of Mrs. Cheapstow's company at dinner.

"I see you are far advanced," said Colonel Cheapstow, looking at the figure of the doctor's cabin, which was in exact form and dimensions chalked upon the floor, and in which was placed his sea furniture made to his own orders, every article precisely to fit the space for which it was intended.

"Yes, I think I shall not be ill off—walk into my cabin, colonel; here is my couch, and here is my post just by it, and here are my stern windows. Ye see I am well aired and well lighted."

"I wish we could go with you—what ship do you sail in?"

"The Snowdon—and if it is possible for you to be ready, it's a thing worth thinking about. By good luck the captain is to call this morning; at this very hour," taking out his watch. "And you can settle with

him about accommodation, without loss of time."

Captain Landless kept his appointment, and Colonel Cheapstow's wish to be under the care of his trusty friend Dr. M'Alpin, triumphed over all minor considerations, even the destination to China—and the business was soon settled to the satisfaction of both parties. He agreed to give ten thousand rupees for the other half of the round-house next the doctor's, and a small cabin for the colonel's dressing-room.

"We have abundance of Patna sheep, and Chittagong fowls on board, fine pigs, ducks, geese, turkeys, and guinea-fowls; so that," said Captain Landless, "though we are not a large party, we shall not want for any thing."

"Excuse my sending some things on board, captain. I am an invalid," answered Colonel Cheapstow.

"Certainly, sir, you can send whatever you choose, but permit me to say, that it is useless your taking the trouble. You will

find that we are provided with every thing you can possibly want."

Captain Landless took leave, promising to send his carpenter to take Colonel Cheapstow's orders about the fixtures he might want on board.

The colonel inspected the doctor's cabin again, as his own was its counterpart,—and when the carpenter came gave orders to have it covered with Persian carpeting, which he would send from his boat, to have lamps hung, and additional mirrors put up.

Dr. M'Alpin knew his friend's foible, and took no notice of those orders, though the carpenter bluntly observed, "that the round-house of the Snowdon, was as handsome as ever a ship in the company's service, and that nailed down carpets would be no great improvement if they should happen to poop a green sea off the Cape.

"My hookah, doctor—what am I to do about my hookah?" inquired the colonel;

"do you take yours? you cannot do without, nor can I neither."

"I take it certainly, because I shall want it at Fernbraes, and Cussim Ali has learned to dress it as well as any hookahbardar in Hindostan, but I will not use it on board, knowing that to be dangerous and against orders. I will have my callean* tho'."

"I shall follow your example, and do the same thing, for I should be miserable without the one or the other."

The morning ran on in these preparations, and at the usual hour the two gentlemen tiffed with Mr. Ouseley; Mr. Curzon did not again make his appearance. When the sun began to decline Colonel Cheapstow set forth through the Chitpore bazar, with his silver sticks on the back of his carriage as before. His sices brandished their silver handled chowries† and screamed to the mob as they passed to clear the way,—

* Callean—a small portable hookah.

† Chowries—white cow tails to drive away flies.

orders, however, which were much less likely to be attended to in the crowded bazar of Calcutta, than in the neighbourhood of the residency, and they were stopped in the quarter of the bazar occupied by the professors of Tubal Cain's craft amidst piles of brazen pots and pans, for full five minutes, a thing which the chaprasseys declared had never happened to their master in the whole course of his life.

They made their way, however, through the silk-dyers, artificial flower-makers, cotton-carders, and manufacturers of Hindoostanee sweatmeats, until they reached the Ghaut, where they stopped amidst a crowd of the colonel's servants busily occupied in landing his things. After giving his orders to the head servants of the different departments, he went on board to inform his wife of all he had done in town.

Mrs. Cheapstow was a sensible and excellent woman, though somewhat eccentric, and disposed to speak her mind very freely. She was several years younger than her

husband, and though sincerely attached to him, still liked a little of her own way, and was apt to think that she knew fully as much of the ordinary affairs of life as the colonel. He, amidst many good qualities, had two little foibles, which were sometimes teasing, as they were in exact opposition to the feelings of his wife—his high sense of his own dignity, and his love of good eating. Her frank and open nature was above all the little ostentations, which long residence at a pompous and luxurious court had in a manner rendered second nature to her husband, and she hated the epicurianism to which she traced the severe fits of illness by which he had been lately attacked.

After he had given a full detail of all the particulars, he went on,

"It is an unusual thing, my dear, our going home by the way of China, but the Snowdon is a magnificent ship, and I can never be so well any where as under M'Alpin's care. People might think," he continued, with an air of importance, "such a

step strange upon my part, unless my reasons were known."

"If it suits us it is enough," answered his wife; "people will never trouble themselves about it."

"You mistake, Mrs. Cheapstow, the departure of a man of my standing is of some consequence."

"Yes; certainly to those who are to succeed us in the appointment. Do you know, I heard, at Berhampore, that there are four-and-twenty applications already gone in to his lordship for it."

"I have almost a mind to withdraw my application for leave, and go back to punish such indecorous haste," said the colonel, turning his back, and walking off in a contrary direction.

"We shall be the parties punished, my dear, if Dr. M'Alpin sails before us. If you stay to die here, you will have all these people visiting you in great anxiety to see how you get on, or rather when you are

likely to go off, that they may come in after you."

"They shall do nothing of the kind," answered the colonel, returning. "But how is it possible that we should have any thing in proper condition on board that vessel in such a short time?"

"Oh, we shall just do as others do in that respect."

"It is strange, Mrs. Cheapstow, that you should not consider that more is required for you than for others—my situation entitles you to it."

"Oh, I know that your kindness would do a great deal for me, but if you will not fatigue yourself about those things, and make yourself ill again, I will get our excellent friend the doctor to settle it all to your satisfaction."

"The captain is a gentlemanly sort of fellow," said the colonel, thoughtfully, "and they say knows something of a table, but I should like before going on board to know

exactly what sort of a cook he has. In matters of importance a man likes to go on sure ground. I shall ask Captain Landless to let him come up to Curzon's, and show us what he can do. Our bowberjee can give him some instruction in Hindoostanee cooking, which will be valuable; and his wines I should like to know if they are drinkable; but the most certain way will be to send my own; it is impossible that he can have any thing like them. It is a serious consideration, my dear, one's comfort at sea for five months, and must be properly attended to."

"You forget, I think, Cheapstow, that you are on a regimen, and that the doctor will be there to see it enforced."

"My first care to-morrow morning shall be to look over the list of our wines," answered the colonel, without attending to an observation which he was willing to think superfluous. "Now, let us go."

The colonel talked all the way back to Mr. Curzon's house, on the various schemes for the comfort of his voyage. "You see

what a fortunate thing it was, that I had that set of silver saucepans and spirit of wine lamps made. It would have been impossible to taste coffee or chocolate of their making. What we are to do for butter for breakfast, after the first week, is more than I can devise, unless indeed I can get the captain to give house-room to one of my cows, and then Myrza can make it every morning in the little glass churn as usual—I shall not lose an hour in putting all this in train."

The carriage stopped, and Mr. Curzon came out to hand his new guest into his house, followed by the doctor, whom Mrs. Cheapstow was delighted to see.

Mr. Curzon continued talking with Mrs. Cheapstow, while her husband went over the whole of his intended arrangements with the doctor. Before he could get half through he was obliged to go down to dinner, but he had no sooner taken his seat at table than he began again.

"I have just been telling the doctor, Cur-

zon," he said, "that I mean to ask Captain Landless to let his cook come here one of these nights, if you will permit me."

"Mr. Curzon will neither permit or encourage any thing of the kind," said Mrs. Cheapstow, answering for their host.

"Nor I, neither," joined the doctor, "though I have a high opinion of your bowberjee's talents, colonel. I think, as Mrs. Cheapstow has no objection, we had better leave them behind us at present."

"He knows some things, though," said the colonel, "which are not known to all the world—for instance, Curzon, he would have boiled this capital ham in champagne, and it would have been delicious;" helping himself to a second slice. "Allow me, Mr. Ouseley, to recommend it to you."

"I am so little of a connoisseur in the art, that you must make allowance for whatever you find out of rule here," answered Mr. Curzon.

"It is fortunate for you, Mr. Curzon," said Mrs. Cheapstow, "very fortunate, when

men have neither more nor less talents than their situation requires. Now Cheapstow has talents which can never be called into full exertion. Had he been a cook, instead of a colonel, he would have been an extraordinary traiteur, instead of an ordinary diplomatist."

"Whatever you may think of it, my dear," answered her husband, whose self-love felt the compliment on a favourite pursuit, and made allowance for his wife's way of expressing it, "there is often more nicety and precision and judgment required for the one than the other; to say nothing of exquisite taste, which is a gift from nature. Do not think that I will be laughed out of my opinion. What marks the advancement civilized life so much as this art? When was it ever found amongst savages, or men in a barbarous state? It has always flourished in the most refined and enlightened state of human society, and its progress is a just criterion to judge by."

"Of refinement, I grant you," replied Mrs.

Cheapstow, "if the word mean a perfect knowledge of the art of ministering to corporeal wants, which I fancy is the most generally received sense (though schoolmen may give other definitions), for we are too far advanced to go back to the old stoical or brahminical notion, 'that he is the greatest, who has the fewest wants.'"

"An idea fit for a North American Indian," said the colonel; "but utterly discarded by every polished people. Consider the ancient Greeks and Romans in the meridian of their refinement."

"Or we might say, their corruption"—interrupted the doctor.

The colonel went on; "to what a height they carried the gastronomic art. And our accomplished neighbours, the French, our masters in art and invention,—have they not arrived at a very elevated pitch? to which I must confess for our credit we are fast hastening."

"Forbid it," said the doctor, "that we should sink into a nation of cooks: not that

I mean to take from the profession in its proper place, but forgive me colonel; I never wish to see it up stairs."

"We live in a period of discovery and invention," said Mrs. Cheapstow, "and so many conveniences have been sought out—so many delights have been supplied, that any man, who would discover means to enable the refined part of the world to consume twice as much of its good things as they can possibly do at present, would be entitled to a statue of gold; a reward greater than the King of Ethiopia offered for a new pleasure."

"Practical philosophy," said the colonel, "is always confined to a certain sphere in life; for when necessity gives the command, it is very well to give philosophy the credit."

"But," answered Mrs. Cheapstow, "the beautiful dreams of speculative philosophy are more attractive and suitable for those who have not to do with life's stern realities."

"I have heard the proposal for increasing

the wants of the natives of this country as the most certain means of introducing improvement amongst them. If, for instance, we could establish a Hindoo gastronomic academy, would not the advance be obvious?" said Mr. Curzon, laughing.

"Yes, certainly, and they had reason on their side who made the proposal," answered the colonel.

"If we could once get the Hindoos above the savage barbarity of resting satisfied with boiled rice and water, we might hope to see greater exertions made amongst them, to procure the comforts of life."

"The comforts of life, colonel, are after all but a vague expression," answered the doctor. "At least there is no idea that we have of them, that could indemnify a native for the interruption of his quiet—we must seek something else for those who think that it is better to sit than to stand—to lie than to sit—to sleep than to wake, and that to die is best of all."

CHAPTER VI.

—— Even Nature lives by toil:
Beast, bird, air, fire, the heavens, and rolling worlds
All live by action. Man is born to care;
Fashion'd, improved by labour. Hence utility
Through all conditions: hence the joys of health;
Hence strength of arm and clear judicious thoughts.
DYER.

"I WISH, doctor, that you would go out with me this morning, to pay a visit to my old friend Mrs. Harvey, if you have nothing else to do," said Mrs. Cheapstow to Dr. M'Alpin, as they remained at the breakfast-table after the rest of the party had left it. "You know I cannot very well leave Calcutta without visiting her, since Cheapstow cannot do it for me. I dread to let him run

about in the sun, more than is indispensable."

"Right," answered the doctor.

"Cheapstow must wait on the 'Lord Sahib,' and I hate going out alone."

"I am at your service. How do you go, and when?"

"The sooner the better; will you order the palanquins directly. Cheapstow takes the carriage for his visit of ceremony, and though I detest jogging so far in a palanquin, it will be better if I am admitted, than keeping Curzon's horses in the sun. Tell my ayah, that I am going out," she continued, addressing one of the servants in waiting.

"The order is given," answered the man, as he went out with his message.

In a few minutes he returned with a silver tray in his hand, on which was a fan, smelling-bottle, card-case, and pocket-handkerchief, which he carried down stairs before his mistress, and deposited in her chair palanquin.

"And there is another visit also, we should pay," said Mrs. Cheapstow, before getting in. "A Major Middleton of the company's service, has married the daughter of a particular friend of mine in England, and brought her out with him. I should like to see her if I knew where to find her."

"Curzon has a chaprassey, who makes a point of knowing where every body that comes to Calcutta is to be found. He can help us—but I hope it's not the Middleton that I knew at Benares, else, poor girl, she is not to be envied."

When they arrived at Mrs. Harvey's gate in Park-street, Chowringhee, the durwan only opened the wicket to see who came, and finding visiters said, "His *beebee sahib* (mistress) was not at home."

Oh this is her old way," said Mrs. Cheapstow to the doctor, "a relapse of her valetudinarian habits; but after coming so far, I will not go back without an effort to get in."

"Is your mistress really not at home"

demanded the doctor, addressing the durwan, "or is she ill, and does not see visiters?"

"The beebee sahib is in the house, sahib, and as well as is her custom, but there are no orders to let any stranger in."

"Send my card up to your mistress," ordered Mrs. Cheapstow. "I know," she said to the doctor, "when she sees it I shall be admitted."

The durwan did as he was bid, and sent up a chaprassey with the card, though he said his mistress never saw a strange face or heard a strange word. Contrary to his prediction, however, the chaprassey returned, begging Mrs. Cheapstow to walk up. The gates opened and the palanquins entered the spacious compound* of a very handsome house.

The doctor, giving his arm to Mrs. Cheapstow, was in the act of accompanying her up stairs, when another servant begged in a low voice that he would remain below, and

* Compound—enclosure within a high wall.

ushered him into the billiard-room with as little noise, as if there had been some one seriously ill in the house.

The doctor looked about for something to occupy the time he was thus forced to spend in waiting, and finding nothing else within his reach, took up a cue, and began to push about the billiard-balls.

"Don't do that, sahib," said a bearer respectfully, joining his hands as he spoke. "My mistress does not want the least noise, even to hear a crow speak as he flies in the air; we have a watchman with his bow and arrows to shoot every one that comes near this house."

"What is the matter?" inquired the doctor.

"What do I know, sahib," answered the bearer, with a shrug of his shoulders. "It is the beebee sahib's pleasure not to have a sound outside or inside this house. She turns off every servant who treads heavier than a grasshopper, or speaks louder than a mouse."

In these circumstances the doctor ordered the bearer to bring him a book, with which he would endeavour to pass the time until Mrs. Cheapstow's return, and was very much provoked when the bearer returned with the Civil and Military List, which he considered must, from its frequent requirement, be the most interesting. The "Neel Kittabee," Blue Book, the name they give it, from its being always bound in paper of that colour, is perhaps the only work which every servant in India knows by name.

On following her conductor up stairs, Mrs. Cheapstow found Mrs. Harvey extended upon a couch under the punkah, in the middle of the centre drawing-room. All the windows shut, and all the doors open to circulate a draft.

"How kind it is of you, my dear Mrs. Cheapstow" she said, half-raising herself from her pillows, "to come and see a poor invalid!"

"I am truly sorry to find you in such a sad state," answered Mrs. Cheapstow, and she added with her customary frankness, "I was

in hopes that you were not worse than usual."

"But I am usually so ill—I have such nerves—the least noise or motion distracts me."

"No wonder, if you keep yourself in this kind of dead silence, every noise becomes alarming; but I am happy, notwithstanding, to see you look better than I could have expected—you drive out in the evening, I suppose?"

"Never—it would be utterly impossible for me to sustain all that bustle and fatigue."

"But you could be carried down stairs you know."

"I used to be so, but the exertion agitated my poor frame so much, and I was so afraid that the bearers would let me fall (though I had a most commodious chair made for the very purpose), that I was obliged to give it up."

"And do you live then without air and exercise? How do you contrive to sleep at night?"

"Oh! I have such horrible nights—if it were not for the little sleep I have here during the day, I do not know how I should get through them, though I have the punkah going in my bedroom the whole night."

"It is not every one of us certainly," answered Mrs. Cheapstow, "who has the native faculty of sleeping eighteen or nineteen hours out of the four-and-twenty."

"Unfortunately that is just my case," answered the invalid, who in her earnestness to prove her unfitness for any exertion, sat upright on her couch, and spoke with great animation—"and my appetite is so miserable too—if I had not something every three hours, I should die of pure inanition. No one can have the most distant idea of what I suffer—if it were not that this is the coolest room in the house, I would never venture to quit my own apartment"—she looked round on the splendid and silent suite of rooms—"the doctor always says my life is a standing miracle."

"Finding how you do live, Mrs. Harvey, I should quite agree with him."

From the time Mrs. Cheapstow had come into the room, Mrs. Harvey's *day* ayah, had sat quietly squatted at the end of her mistresses couch, holding upon her thumb the loop of a silk cord, which extended to the landing-place. This cord was now gently twitched, the ayah got up, and treading softly as if she feared to wake the echoes, went out of the room, and after whispering for a moment returned followed by a kitmutgar, who with the same noiseless step, set a tripod near Mrs. Harvey's couch, upon which, having first spread a table napkin, he placed a silver hot-water covered plate, knife, fork, and bread.

"Will you eat a nice juicy mutton-chop, Mrs. Cheapstow?" inquired the invalid, as the kitmurgar uncovered her own.

"Nothing is so good for those who are not strong;—a mutton-chop at this hour the doctor tells me, is the most nourishing thing

in the world—I take soups and jellies in the evening—may I order it?"

"Thank you, it is too soon after breakfast for me, and, in fact, I never touch any thing between meals."

"How fortunate you are to be able to do without—I must even have something in the middle of the night."

She held up her finger over her shoulder to the servant, who with crossed arms watched behind her couch. He went out on tiptoe, and returned with Madeira which misted the glass like ice as he poured it out to his mistress.

When she had finished the whole of her substantial refreshment, the things were removed with as little noise as they had been brought. The ayah again took her loop upon her thumb, and stationing herself on the floor as before, the same profound tranquillity was restored.

"Do you not pity me," said Mrs. Harvey, laying herself languidly back upon her pil-

lows—" Do you not pity me Mrs. Cheapstow being obliged to lead such a life?"

" I never saw any person in my life whom I pity more; and is this your day?"

" Yes! and I may almost say my night also, with the difference of my being in my bedroom; I do not know that there is any other."

" But how do you do with your people? how are they able to stand it?"

" Oh! I have another set for the night—you know that the natives have no feeling to enable them to sit up with a poor invalid like me."

" But you do not mean, Mrs. Harvey to say, that you always lead this life?—you do not mean to say that you never go out, and take your meals at table like other people?"

" Yes, indeed I do. Unfortunately I grow every day worse and worse instead of better."

" And what does Mr. Harvey do? all this is doubtless very distressing to him, and he

must feel very lonely, if he has not company with him when he dines at home."

"Oh! he is very good, he just dines up here, because I like to see him; he has his dinner in the quiet way you saw me take my morsel just now."

"That is really being good," answered Mrs. Cheapstow, laughing—"and have you got his friends to be as good also?"

"No; but I have got him to give up ever asking any of them here—you are the only stranger who has been within these doors time out of memory."

"I am sorry to hear it; for living in this way alone, is, at least, half the cause of your illness."

"I have not spirits to see any one, talking quite exhausts me; though I confess, my dear Mrs. Cheapstow, that I have been benefited by seeing you this morning."

"Why do you not go home? a cold climate would set all to rights."

"That is what Harvey says, but a ship would make me miserable, I should be with-

out my comforts, and without my attendants; the noise would distract me; the trouble would kill me. I am altogether so differently constructed from other people."

Mrs. Cheapstow felt that any thing she could say on this subject would be perfectly unavailing, and therefore abstained from pressing it, she saw with pity the effect of climate and indulgence upon a weak mind, and rose to take her leave fully convinced of the hopelessness of the case.

The ayah in turn twitched the cord, and a chaprassey in waiting showed himself at the door, to conduct the guest down stairs with the same silence as before. Mrs. Cheapstow remarked that the dumb attendants had looked with wonder at hearing her address their mistress in an ordinary voice, never being accustomed to hear any one, even her husband, speak to her in a tone above a whisper.

Mrs. Cheapstow on reaching the hall, found her worthy friend the doctor's patience almost expended, as the "Neel

Kittabee" did not contain any thing very new, and was more interesting to those who were entering than to those who were quitting the service.

"One would think," he said, as he handed Mrs. Cheapstow into her palanquin, "one would think that my excellent friends were in league to reconcile me to my bachelor condition. You have shown me this morning, that I might be worse off, and Curzon did the same the other night."

"Yes, yes, doctor, if you begin to grumble on that score I shall be tempted to make some more visits for your conviction, though I am so fatigued with this I have made, that I shall be glad to get home. I am quite overcome with pity for poor Harvey—think of a man going up and down stairs on tiptoe all his life, and speaking in whispers, and being served by signs, and as effectually cut off from society as if he were on a desert island!"

"Ay," answered the doctor, "he is to be pitied, when the mind is entirely neglected the body takes up all our attention; that's

of all diseases the most incurable—but you forget Mrs. Middleton: if she has married the man I suppose, it will be an act of charity to visit her."

"This visit had almost put every thing else out of my head; but can you direct my people?"

The doctor gave the necessary address, and they took their way through the Durumtollah, into the Circular Road; where, after a good deal of searching, they were carried into the compound of a small "lower-roomed" house, daubed on the outside with yellow ochre; standing upon the bank of a little stagnate tank, or rather muddy pool, which had been scooped out as the clay was wanted for building the native huts in the neighbourhood; it was covered with decayed vegetation, and overhung by tall melancholy cocoa-nuts, which looked more solitary in proportion to the numbers got together; no green thing grows under them, and their tall branchless trunks give them a funeral appearance.

"This can never be Middleton's place,"

said the doctor, "it must be some country-born Portuguese writer's."

"What gentleman's house?" demanded Mrs. Cheapstow's chaprassey, of a half-naked bearer who was sleeping in the veranda, and who started up rubbing his eyes, when the chaprassey pulled him by the foot, and shook him by the shoulders to obtain an answer.

"Major Middleton Sahib's house."

"Is the 'beebee sahib' at home?"

"Me—what do I know?" said the bearer, still rubbing his eyes, and making a few steps towards the hall, and then returning as if uncertain what was to be done.

The chaprassey who was accustomed to more alacrity in the service of his mistress, ran forward and announced "Beebee Chiptow, and Dr. Al-pin Sahib," at the pitch of his voice, and returned to open the palanquin-door, saying "the lady was at home."

Mrs. Cheapstow got out in a veranda, littered with straw, packing-cases, and empty bottles, &c., the doctor conducted her

into the small hall, miserably furnished without mat, the want of that necessary article was supplied by a common settringee under the feet of the table in the middle of the floor. The whole house consisted of this hall on the one side, and two small apartments off it at the other.

"A place for a native," muttered the doctor, as he crossed the threshold and entered the little comfortless abode, from which even a breath of air was excluded by the tall trees which run up above the back windows. The mark of green damp on the walls added to the idea which Mrs. Cheapstow conceived at first sight, that it was just a place to catch fever and ague.

They found Mrs. Middleton seated before the table on which she was writing. She rose timidly, and made several ineffectual efforts to make her solitary attendant understand that she wanted more chairs, Mrs. Cheapstow's chaprassey, however, alertly saved her any further trouble on that score, by placing those required.

Mrs. Cheapstow after introducing herself and the doctor, and inquiring for Mrs. Middleton's friends at home, expressed the pleasure she would have had in being introduced to her husband.

"I regret he is absent," answered his wife; "and I am certain he will himself regret missing the pleasure of seeing you, Mrs. Cheapstow, but he is never at home."

"How!" said the doctor; "he does not leave you here all day by yourself?"

"Yes—indeed he does; he has so many friends in Calcutta, and I am a perfect stranger."

"And when he is absent, how do you do with the servants? Ye have not been here long enough to make yourself well understood?" asked the doctor.

"Oh no—only a fortnight, and I cannot call for any thing, but must be contented with what they please to give me. Yesterday I had no dinner — there was none brought, and I could not order it."

The doctor looked at Mrs. Cheapstow, as if he would say, "that is just the man—selfish and inconsiderate as usual."

"Do you," inquired Mrs. Cheapstow, "not tire, Mrs. Middleton, living here by yourself—you must be very dull?"

"Yes; but I hope we shall soon leave the Presidency, and then, Major Middleton tells me, it will be more cheerful: he has no conveyance but his palanquin, and cannot take me out."

The doctor was tempted to say, "then he ought to stay at home himself;" but the ungracious observation did not pass his lips.

"You go out," he said, "to drive in the evening certainly, "at least with some of your friends?"

"No, indeed I do not. I do not know a single creature in the place — Mrs. Cheapstow and yourself are the first who have had the kindness to inquire for me; and I find living in India entirely different to what

I expected—every article of food is so bad, and every thing so uncomfortable, that I sincerely wish myself back in England."

"You must not be discouraged," said Mrs. Cheapstow, "by the unfavourable specimen you have had. When you know the country, you will find it entirely different."

"Oh, I am certain I shall never be reconciled to it. Last night I was so frightened! an enormous bat flew into the room while I was sitting here in the dark, for they forgot to light the lamps as well as to give me any dinner, and the creature made such a horrid squeaking, that I was almost terrified to death."

Mrs. Cheapstow felt sincerely for a poor young creature, left in such a forlorn situation, and denied the common comforts of existence, by the selfish carelessness of one who had taken her so far from the bosom of her family. She made Mrs. Middleton promise to spend a day with her at Mr. Curzon's, and offered to send the carriage to

convey her. She then took leave, and they had hardly gained the veranda before the doctor began expressing his regret at leaving such a pretty young creature, in such miserable circumstances.

"Middleton is just the same man I find," he said, when they were out of hearing; "he guides this wife just as he did the first. I remember when she was dying, he dined out every night all over cantonments."

"It is a cruel thing, doctor, to take an amiable girl from her family, where she has been loved and cherished, and bring her out here to die of neglect and unkindness."

"He would have sought long in this country, I promise him, before he would have got such a wife—his character is too well known; but in England, where nobody knows any thing about him, or his behaviour to his poor first wife, he has had better success."

"I am sorry for her, poor thing—hers is a melancholy prospect—she little knows the fatigues and sufferings of following such a

man in a country like this. He is not one of the men, doctor, to use an expression of yours, that a woman would go through fire and water for; but fortunately it is a case that we do not often meet."

"That's true; prodigality, and not penury, is the habit of the country; and if we do meet with the griping hands, it must be so much nature with them, that it seldom keeps bounds. I *have* seen in the course of my life one or two rare examples, even here."

"At home, if a woman has the misfortune to marry a negligent, selfish man, as this seems to be, wholly devoted to his own comfort and pleasure, she has, if not the satisfaction of her friend's society, at least the attendance of her own women. The circumstances are so different, that the cases hardly admit of a parallel. Here, a woman's life is in the hands of her husband—if he neglects her, every servant in the house does the same."

"Middleton, is one of the 'Company's hard bargains,' he would never willingly do any thing for them, but receive his pay. He turns his duty over to any one that will do it for him, and has always been sick when his corps is to go on service; and never cooks a dinner in his own house, when he can get it elsewhere. He likes every part of good eating, but its cost; and it is nothing to him that his poor wife, is dining upon a starved bazar chicken, dried in the cinders, while he is in the fort, in the 'Buildings,' and the race-stand, and at the town-hall with the 'Lunatic Club.'* He knows that Gunter† dresses things more to his taste, than he is likely to get them in the miserable hole in which he has stowed his pretty wife, poor thing!"

Mrs. Cheapstow and Dr. M'Alpin reached home in time for tiffin, and found the man,

* Lunatic club, so called from the meetings being held at the new and full of the moon.

† Gunter, a celebrated *traiteur*.

whose house they had just left, talking with Mr. Ouseley in the drawing-room.

"We have just come from your house," said the doctor, after having introduced Major Middleton to Mrs. Cheapstow.

"You did not find any one at home?" he said. "How unfortunate I should happen to be out when you did us the honour to call, Mrs. Cheapstow!"

"We were more successful," replied the doctor—"finding that Mrs. Middleton was not from home, we made good our entry, though the only one of your people we saw wished to keep us out."

"I am quite ashamed Mrs. Cheapstow," said Major Middleton, with an air of embarrassment, "that you should have the trouble of going to such a place, which in fact I intend to quit as soon as possible—the truth is, before landing from the ship, I employed a sircar to take a house for me, and he put us into that miserable out-of-the-way corner; but I have been out every day since we came, to seek for a proper place."

"And not found a house in the fifteen days, that your wife tells me, you have been here, Middleton?" said the doctor, "I'll engage to provide you with a comfortable abode before sunset this evening. There's no lack of them in Calcutta. Will you, Ouseley, as you pass the Tennis Court, step in and inquire—"

"Not for the world!" interrupted Mr. Middleton, hastily, "I could not think, Mr. Ouseley, of letting you take such trouble —my dear M'Alpin, this is really too kind."

"The kindness is not intended for you Middleton, so do not distress yourself about it. It is for your wife's sake that I am anxious you should be out of that pestilential neighbourhood. As a medical man I have a right to direct it, and I tell you that I'll get a good house, in a proper situation, before sunset. It does not do for a young girl just come from Europe to breathe the infectious air of your place."

"You shall not positively take any trou-

ble on the score, M'Alpin—I heard to day of a house which I think will suit us."

"Get into it then, my friend, or never let me see your face again. The doctor's advice is not to be slighted with impunity—and get a carriage to give your wife a mouthful of fresh air too," said the doctor in a tone between jest and earnest—"I prescribe according to the circumstances of my patients."

"I wish you would prescribe a buggy for me, doctor," said Mr. Ouseley, laughing, "I would get it directly if you would only authorize me to write home to my father, and say the doctor ordered it."

"Fair and softly my friend, content yourself with your horse until you have a wife to drive, or a majority to support it."

"Our friend, the doctor, Mrs. Cheapstow," said Major Middleton, with the air of plausibility and easy assurance, which often passes current for agreeable manners and knowledge of the world, "our excellent friend in his old

way avails himself of all his privileges—but here is the consumah—allow me to have the honour of conducting you to table."

"Mrs. Cheapstow will never be answerable for the sin of keeping you from your wife, Middleton."

Major Middleton saw the intention, but was resolved to stand his ground, as was his custom, against all rebuffs—"Mrs. Middleton is one of the most domestic creatures in the world," he said to Mrs. Cheapstow in going down stairs, "there is no getting her to go out—and I regret exceedingly being obliged to leave her so much alone. You know my duty must be attended to, and I am forced to run from one public office to another, all round Calcutta—I am obliged to go to the Adjutant-general's directly after tiffin, and I took the only spare minute I could command, Mrs. Cheapstow, to have the honour of waiting upon you, whom I have often heard Mrs. Middleton's friends at home speak of with the utmost respect and affection."

"Middleton knows to choose the hour well for his spare moments," whispered the doctor to Mr. Ouseley as they followed down stairs—"if he would only put the talents that nature has bestowed upon him, to any creditable purpose, he might make a respectable figure in the world, instead of shaping himself into a poor parasite, whose whole value is in his banker's hands. Was it ever heard of, that a man in his situation in life—in the situation of a gentleman, should tell the lies that he has done within the last half-hour? The thought of seeking for a house never entered into his head, any more than going to England in a balloon entered into mine. He will not rest now until he has hooked himself upon Curzon for a visiter after I am out of the way—I know that fellow so well."

Mr. Ouseley laughed immoderately at what he considered the doctor's odd ways, and they just reached the table in time to hear Major Middleton say to Mrs. Cheapstow,

"and am I not to have the honour of being introduced to Colonel Cheapstow, to-day?"

"He went out early this morning," answered his wife, "and has not yet returned. A thing very unusual with him I can assure you; but here he comes to speak for himself"—as Colonel Cheapstow's chaprasseys entered, one carrying his hat, and another his sword, while their master followed.

The major was introduced, and Colonel Cheapstow received his compliments with dignified gravity.

Middleton was not so much his equal as to be received upon a perfect footing of equality, and yet too near it to be treated with the unceremonious kindness, which Colonel Cheapstow extended to young Ouseley, and all those whose situation made them receive as a favour, what they could not claim as a right.

"And what, my dear, has detained you so long?" inquired his wife.

"His lordship was so happy to see me, that I found it impossible to get away; and he insisted upon my going up to visit his lady, who inquired most kindly and particularly after you, my dear," answered the colonel, who seemed highly gratified with the attention he had received. "His lordship is a man of sound sense and great penetration and discernment; he is quite pleased with all I have done. I have promised, my dear, that you will dine at government-house to-morrow night."

"It is unfortunate; for Curzon has been kind enough to ask friends here on purpose to meet us."

"The Governor-general's invitation is a command," said the doctor, "and all other engagements must give way. Though I have been engaged to a friend for the last week, I must dine there to-night—I wish it had been to-morrow."

"And when his lordship has made the evening for you, my dear," said Colonel

Cheapstow to his wife, "it must be taken as a compliment."

"I have understood from one who is much about the house," said Major Middleton, "that his lordship had expressed a great desire to see you, Colonel Cheapstow."

"Do you hear that?" said the doctor aside to Ouseley; "if Curzon had been here, his lordship would perhaps have been talking, too, of Persian and Hindostanee works."

Colonel Cheapstow was, however, a perfect stranger to Major Middleton, and received his gratuitous information in quite a different spirit.

"Allow me," he said, "the pleasure to take wine with you, Major Middleton. I thought, my dear," addressing his wife, "that I was received with more than usual satisfaction."

After tiffin, Major Middleton took his departure, but not before he had declared his

intention to Mrs. Cheapstow, of returning the first evening he could possibly command, as that was the only time he could hope to find Mr. Curzon in his own house.

CHAPTER VII.

Their stately ship sail'd gallantly,
Furrowing the dark sea foam,
But many a prow has left the strand
That never reach'd her home!

OLD BALLAD.

COLONEL CHEAPSTOW'S numerous purchases were completed, his comforts provided, and his cabins furnished with every convenience that could render a voyage delightful, by the time the Snowdon was in readiness to sail from Sangor Island.

Mr. Curzon who saw the departure of his highly-valued friend, Dr. M'Alpin with great regret, as there was no chance of their ever meeting again, resolved to accompany

the party going from his own house down to the ship. Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow occupied one Sangor passage-boat, Dr. M'Alpin and Mr. Curzon another.

Mr. Curzon parted from his friends the night they reached the vessel, as she was to sail at daybreak.

"Could I but hope to see you, Curzon," said the doctor, as he wrung the hand of his his friend—"could I but hope to see you in my own house!"

"It cannot be, M'Alpin. God bless you, my friend. Farewell!"

The doctor felt when Mr. Curzon was over the ship's side, as if his last regret at leaving India was passed; his kind heart had suffered by the clamorous leave-taking of his own servants before he came into the ship; some had prostrated themselves on the ground and embraced his feet, while others had lifted up their voices and wept aloud, and he could not see those who had been about him for so many years for the last time, with indifference.

Cussim Ali was now all that remained to him of his numerous household, and the poor creature seemed overcome with trouble at parting with his own people and his own land, and finding himself in a situation so new; but whatever his thoughts might be, he gave them no tongue, having practical philosophy enough to understand, that they could be of no interest to any one there, except his master, whom he felt to be too much above his sphere to be troubled with "such words."

At daybreak the anchor was up, and the Snowdon stood down the bay; there was only one passenger on board for China besides our friends already mentioned, and a detachment of European troops with their wives and children for one of the islands. Before the party assembled at dinner, they had lost sight of the flat shores of Bengal, and a thick fog came on, though the little wind they had continued fair.

The following morning the mist still remained so thick that they could not get an ob-

servation; towards evening the wind sunk to a perfect calm, and they felt themselves to be under the influence of the currents which run with great force in the Bay of Bengal—a situation the more hazardous, as the weather for several days continued equally thick, and they were consequently unable to judge of their course.

On the evening of the third day, when Mr. Clairville, the passenger already mentioned, was walking the deck with Captain Landless, and occasionally leaning over the lee-gangway to observe the fog which was slowly dispersing, he asked the captain, "What can that be which I see white, on our lee-bow?"

"White? where? the moonshine on the water, I suppose; pass the word for my night telescope there," answered the captain.

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Down helm, and about ship!" thundered the captain.

"Breakers on our lee-bow! Breakers

ahead! Breakers astern!" sung out the man on the foretop.

In an instant all was in motion, the alarming intelligence had brought every one within hearing of it on deck. The ship under the influence of strong currents, and without wind to fill her backed sails, refused to obey the helm, and in a few minutes, notwithstanding every exertion, struck with a shock which brought the masts over her side. She made a plunge under the falling mass.

"Cut the riggings!" shouted the captain.

The ready carpenters obeyed the prompt order; the severed masts floated under the prow. When the ship struck, a shriek rose from the lower decks, capable of striking terror into any heart, less tried in danger than those of the brave seamen, whose energies seemed roused by such a call. Those who had been in bed came rushing upon deck to ascertain their fate, the women and children, many of whom had been dashed from their cots by the shock,

heightened the alarm and confusion by their presence and their screams.

"Peace, for an instant, I command you!" said Captain Landless, darting into the midst of the terrified group, and waving his arm with an air of authority. "Peace, on your lives, and hear me. We have struck on a sunken rock, and may yet have time to save ourselves in the boats."

He had no sooner spoken the words than there was a rush towards them.

"Hear, boatswain!" he cried, "with the quartermasters, guard the boats, and cut down the first living creature who dares to touch them without orders." The frightened multitude stood still. "Gentlemen, exert the authority which God has given you. Command your families, and all will be well."

The steadiness of one man in authority, produced a kind of order out of confusion. The seamen, accustomed to hear and obey his voice in danger, stood ready to do his bidding, and the gentlemen and passengers,

aware of the necessity of subordination and co-operation, exerted an effectual authority as soon as their respective children were gathered round their distracted mothers. The captain seeing in an instant what was to be done for the salvation of those under his care, ordered the boats to be lowered, and the lead to be flung, for the purpose of taking soundings.

The fall of the masts was a fortunate circumstance; as soon as they were cut away, the ship was lightened, and perhaps by that means prevented from further motion, which must have been instantly fatal. She had struck on the sharp point of a rock under water, which entering through the bottom, held her in equal balance, and prevented her from sinking, though the water rose in the orlop and even gun deck, to a level with the sea. The moment of striking was announced by a general and wild shriek of unearthly energy, and followed by the continued gurgling of the water, increasing in loudness as it increased in quantity, and

forced its way through all opposition into every crevice and opening of the ship. The women, frantic with terror, rushed about screaming for their children.

"It is all over," said Colonel Cheapstow, who met one of these poor creatures at his cabin-door. "Those who have children, are equal with those who have none; but I shall do what I can for you, though it is but for a moment."

As he spoke, a swell upon which the vessel could not rise, broke over her, and again the same dread shriek sounded, though hoarser and deeper, as if almost suffocated with the weight of the water. The vessel stood firm, and though many persons were thrown down and severely hurt, none were washed overboard, as uninjured by the storm the bulwarks retained their position.

"We may stand until the next tide," said the captain, "therefore until the boats are in readiness, let the women and children be taken into the cabins that are not under water, it is useless to expose any one here,

who is not on duty, to be mutilated by the swells which must break over us."

"Let us take wine in the boat for these poor creatures," said Dr. M'Alpin.

He went into his cabin for the purpose of getting it, and Mrs. Cheapstow also passed out the few bottles which her husband always kept at hand, which were all that could be found, as the rest of the vessel was now under water.

As soon as the long boat was lowered into the sea, Mrs. Cheapstow and the soldiers' wives and children were safely placed in it.

"Dr. M'Alpin will go in that boat, where his assistance may be so much wanted," said Captain Landless.

"Willingly," answered the doctor, "but I must take Cussim Ali with me."

"Impossible!" said the officer in command of the boat, "there is but room for one person."

"And who," demanded the captain sternly, "is this Cussim Ali?"

"My servant," answered the doctor, "who is under my protection, and who has left kindred and country to follow me, and whom I will never leave in a situation of danger while the breath is in my body."

"Let him go Manning," said the captain, "his weight cannot much affect you."

The doctor got into the long boat, and received his half-dead domestic from the hands of the stout seamen, who lowered him down, benumbed by cold and wet.

The boat pushed off. "We are too heavy," said the officer, "too deep in the water," as drawn by the currents they passed close under the bow of the ship.

A native Portuguese, in an agony of fear, caught a rope, and threw himself with it from the bowsprit in hopes of attaining the boat. The rowers made every effort to shoot ahead, but he swam stoutly, and had just attained his object, and laid his right hand on the side of the boat, which his weight brought to a level with the water.

"We are gone!" shouted the helmsman with a fearful oath.

The officer in command of the boat snatched an oar, and with a tremendous blow broke the clinging arms of the swimmer, who fell off with a look on the face of the officer which curdled the blood of those who beheld it. The women covered their eyes, the boat righted, and the sufferer, with one strong convulsive gasp, sunk like a stone, and was seen no more. For an instant the whirling waters eddied round in the spot where he disappeared, and then a bubble broke, as the breath of life, over which they closed, rose to the surface.

"An unblessed deed!" said the doctor. "I would not have the expression of those eyes turned upon me for all the sun looks down upon."

"I have done my duty," said Manning, resting upon the oar he had just used. "The lives of all here were intrusted to my care, and if it had been my own brother I

must have done the same; another instant would have sent every soul to the bottom."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the weather-beaten helmsman, "a seaman's duty is sometimes harder than a landsman dreams of."

"As God knows this night can testify," said the doctor, whose strongly agitated countenance showed the agony which was within.

Mrs. Cheapstow continued to rest her head on her hand, while her fingers covered her eyes. Manning in the stern, conscious that he had done his duty, attended only to the movements of the boat under his care. A clear morning began to dawn, and he found that drawn by the currents, they were within a short distance of a little rocky island which seemed to be thickly wooded. They were obliged to coast the whole side of the island nearest to them before they could find a landing-place; at length they fortunately discovered a small sandy bay, on one side of which a flat ledge of rock ran into the sea like a natural pier, and as the

water was deep enough to admit the boat's coming quite close, the women and children were landed without difficulty. Manning superintended the whole operation, and gave the most active assistance, though Mrs. Cheapstow almost shrunk from his offered help.

Cussim Ali, who was the last of the passengers to quit the boat, and who had not altogether recovered from his cold and sickness, in endeavouring to reach from the side to the shore, where his master extended a hand to assist him, lost his footing, fell between the boat and the rock, and was out of sight in an instant.

"Let go the cable!" cried Manning to the men who held the vessel in shore, by a rope from her bow, while stripping off his jacket and throwing it on the beach, as he spoke, he jumped into the water.

The boat drifted from the shore, and neither Cussim Ali or Manning were visible to the anxious spectators. In a few seconds however, the latter rose to the surface, with

what appeared to be the drowned body of the poor native in his left hand, which he had strongly clenched in the Mussulman's sash. He swam with him towards the boat which pulled to meet him, and a seaman with powerful arm at once lifted him in. Manning turned, and soon reached the shore, where in another instant he was assisting the men to hawl in the boat, which was no sooner effected than Cussim Ali was delivered to his master, not drowned, but so near it, that it required some exertion of the doctor's art to restore him to life.

When the doctor was quite satisfied of his poor follower's recovery, he remembered his deliverer.

"Sir," he said going up to Manning, who, as soon as he saw that Cussim was out of danger, only thought of wringing the water from his clothes. "What can I do, to show my sense of what you have this day done—you have preserved a life that though of but little worth to others, is much to me."

"I have done but my duty," answered the

officer with the utmost unconcern. "I would deserve to be blamed if I had done otherwise."

"You risked your life to save that poor creature, who would have been drowned, had it not been for you," said the doctor.

"The boat, and every one in it, was put under my care, by my captain, and I hope I know my duty as a seaman better than to let life, or any thing else come between me and its execution."

"Nobly answered!" said the doctor, "and I hope ye'll forgive what I said in a moment when I could not so well judge of your sentiments."

"Freely," returned the officer,—"I did my duty then, and I did no more now. It cannot be expected that a landsman should enter into a seaman's feelings—though you too, doctor, have perhaps witnessed a regimental flogging, and in the discharge of *your* duty, let the drummers lay in, while the man was able to bear another lash, and you may have used the knife and lopped the

limb, when it was necessary for the preservation of the body. But the tide is now upon the turn, and we must take advantage of it, to get back to the ship."

After Manning had left him, the doctor stood for a few minutes musing upon a leaf in the human heart, which had not yet fallen under his observation. "Here is a heart of iron," he said, "in a breast of steel, as his messmates will say, but the more flinty the duties are which strike upon it, the brighter will the sparkles from it be; and I almost believe he has as much satisfaction in the one duty this day performed, as in the other; the single circumstance of its being duty, hallows it in his eyes. When I saw a supplicant wretch clinging for life, he only saw an imminent danger to those under his care, and his only thought was to save them; and when it was done, I can never forget the look of those eyes; he neither saw, nor heard, nor thought of any thing but the vessel under his command, as she righted, and he thinks as little of having risked his life to save my

poor Cussim; but whatever he may think of it, I'll never forget it, and it will go hard with me, but it will meet him yet."

With this resolution the doctor rejoined Mrs. Cheapstow, whom he found with the soldier's wives and children,—"Do you see any thing of the Colonel," she said, "doctor? surely the second boat, in which he and the men were to come, might be here by this time."

"That's impossible, with such currents, and the tide too against them," answered the doctor, "so we need not expect them yet for an hour or more—and in the mean time, while I go and look for a better place, stay you here in the shelter of the rocks."

"I will go with you, doctor," said Mrs. Cheapstow. "I have no children to detain me, and I will take this mug, which somebody has fortunately brought on shore, and endeavour to find water for the poor infants who are dying with thirst. The little wine which we took with us is all expended, and

it seems rather to have increased the evil than done any good."

"Keep your children in the shadow of the rocks," said the doctor to the women who were anxiously thronging round to hear what was determined upon. "Try to amuse them, and keep them from crying, which makes them but the more thirsty, and we will return as soon as we have found any thing eatable or drinkable."

The doctor had providently brought his gun, and made himself almost certain of meeting with birds of some kind. "I cannot speak to you of what has passed this day," said Mrs. Cheapstow to the doctor as soon as they were alone—"Let us rather think and speak of what we have to do; I trust the other boats will soon arrive; I am miserable about Cheapstow, who I know cannot and will not leave the vessel until the soldiers are out of it."

"If we could but discover fruit or water, we might do until the other boats come, for they will certainly bring us something else, we shall

be in a fearful condition with these famishing bairns, and their miserable mothers; but let us hope the best, and try what we can do."

Cussim Ali recovered from the effects of a plunge, which had nearly cost him his life, followed his master, and earnestly sought for the two necessaries of which they were so much in want. Finding that their little island was altogether flat, he mounted into the top of a tall tree, and from that height perceived a pool of water, through a small opening in the wood—Cussim had a considerable portion of the activity and intelligence which is oftener found in Hindostan among old men than young; though he had certainly passed his youth, he had not attained the years which his white beard might seem to indicate. When from the top of the tree he had announced his joyful discovery (and the inordinate quantity of salt water he had taken made him doubly rejoice in the sight of fresh), his master and Mrs. Cheapstow went to the spot, and had the satisfaction to find that it was better than could have been expected.

"I have my gun, you see, Mrs. Cheapstow," said the doctor, "so do not be afraid of wild animals; but it is better to try and find whether they haunt here, before we bring these poor creatures and their little ones."

After the narrowest inspection of the pool and its neighbourhood, Cassim Ali gave it as his opinion that there were no beasts of any kind there; and on such a subject his was a high authority, as he had all his life been a kind of sportsman in his leisure hours, and been accustomed to provide something for his own curry, and, to use his own phrase, "knew that work well."

"There are no beasts here, sahib," he said, "not even deer; you see that the moss on the trees is untouched, and even the long tender shoots from the root, which deer like best; your own eyes see that, sahib, and if there are no deer there can be no tigers; what would they eat in such a place as this?"

Relieved from apprehension on this score,

the doctor and Mrs. Cheapstow returned to the spot where they left their fellow-sufferers with the good news of their discovery. On reaching the beach, they had the satisfaction to see another boat from the ship so near, that they could distinguish Colonel Cheapstow and Mr. Clairville, amongst the soldiers with whom it was filled.

Mrs. Cheapstow went forward on the rocks to meet her husband, who vainly begged she would not expose herself in the sun, and when the first pleasure of seeing him safely landed, had subsided, she perceived that he was followed by his Portuguese servant Mirza, carrying a well-stuffed bag over his shoulder.

"What have you brought, Cheapstow?" demanded his wife. "Provisions I trust, for we have not been able to find any eatable thing in this uninhabited place."

"How unfortunate," said the colonel, "I never for an instant doubted of your finding plenty of game, and have even made Mirza bring a lamp and some sauce that we might

do them justice. However, we shall certainly find fish, and the sauce will not be altogether useless."

"But that is not all your bag contains—what else have you?"

"A change of clothes for you, my dear, and your jewel-box, which I saved from the hands of one of the men, who was in the act of breaking up your trunks, after the first boat had left the vessel; and I have also taken my own boat cloak and M'Alpin's, which by your account of the place, are more likely to be useful than the first-mentioned articles; since there are no lives lost, nor I hope likely to be, (for I think the captain and the whole of the seamen will be here in a few hours,) the worst part of our disaster, is falling on a desert island."

"The longboat then, which brought us here, had not reached the ship before you left it, Cheapstow?" demanded his wife.

"No, nor was she within hail of us—we saw her at a distance, taking advantage of the currents which set outwards, while we

were obliged to do just the contrary. But the captain when he returns in her, will not omit to bring provisions of all sorts, and shooting and fishing materials. There must be something on the island."

"I fear that with so many we shall be dreadfully off," answered Mrs. Cheapstow; "but I am very much obliged to you for thinking of my comfort in such circumstances."

The seamen who had brought this last boat were so much fatigued with the hard labour they had had in pulling against the currents and ebb tide, that they declared themselves utterly unable to go off again until the afternoon. It was in vain that Colonel Cheapstow and Dr. M'Alpin urged them by every argument they could think of to make a strenuous exertion, where time was so precious, the heat of the sun and intense thirst had quite exhausted them, and they with the rest took their way to the water which had just been discovered; there, having satisfied their thirst they

threw themselves to sleep in the shade of the trees. Some of the soldiers had fortunately taken a few biscuits in their pockets, which soaked in the water, served for a time to allay the hunger of the children; others had loaded themselves, as far as they could do it, without being perceived, with things of more value and less utility.

"This is dreadful, M'Alpin!" said the colonel. "What can be done for ourselves, and these unhappy infants, who must perish if relief is not speedily procured?"

"This island," answered the doctor, "has every appearance of being utterly uninhabited by either man or beast—still we are not altogether sure—my advice is, that we keep ourselves quiet until the sun is a little lower (for it would be making bad worse to bring illness amongst us), and then make the circuit of the place."

"I quite agree with you, M'Alpin," answered Col. Cheapstow, "and then let us divide into separate parties, and coast the

island in opposite directions, some within and some without the rocks, as at low water we may possibly find turtle or fish of some kind, and we shall at once ascertain whether it contains animals, fowls, fruit, or any thing eatable, without wasting our strength in useless anticipations."

The plan of operation once fixed, the parties waited more particularly for the hour when they could put it into execution. Dr. M'Alpin tried to persuade Col. Cheapstow, whose health was but partially re-established, to leave him, Mr. Clairville, and the men to undertake this fatiguing research; he, however, in his character as commanding officer, was by no means to be dissuaded from undertaking what he conceived to be a duty upon him, and he set out on the circuit of discovery in one direction with some of the men, while Dr. M'Alpin and Mr. Clairville took another. Mrs. Cheapstow, with the rest of the party, remained near the landing-place, in case the boat should arrive in their absence.

After a long and fatiguing walk over sharp and slippery coral rocks, Colonel Cheapstow and his friend Dr. M'Alpin met on the other side of the island, without having discovered any thing but a few shellfish left among the rocks by the ebb, and a few sea cocoa-nuts above the water-mark, which seemed rather to have been thrown on the beach by the tide, than to be the produce of the island. Weary and dispirited they were joined by Mr. Clairville and the others, who had explored the interior with as little success. Some large rats, making their way to the sea-shore, to feed upon what the ebb might have left them, were the only living creatures they had seen.

"If there were monkeys," said Cussim Ali, "we would have been sure of fruit, and if there were birds we should find grain; but there is neither the one nor the other: in this bad place there is nothing but water to fill our stomachs."

"It's but too true, Cussim," said his mas-

ter; "but if there's nothing to benefit us, there's nothing to hurt us, so we must just go back again and wait till the boats come."

CHAPTER VIII.

'Tis not for mortals always to be bless'd;
But him the least the dull or painful hours
Of life oppress, whom sober sense conducts,
And virtue through this labyrinth we tread.

ARMSTRONG.

FROM the moment the ship struck, Captain Landless had only thought of saving the lives of those under his command, as it was plain that in such a situation the vessel could not very long hold together. To send off the boats with as many as they could contain was therefore his first object; "If we can land the people," he said to Manning, "we shall be able to get provisions

afterwards, and if we cannot do both, at all events let us save the lives first."

Unfortunately, in getting the boats into the water, some neglect occurred in the darkness and confusion, by which two of them were staved against the ship's side, so that two only remained for the present service. The longboat, under Manning's skilful direction, after having landed her passengers, reached the wreck just as the tide began to make, and the swell agitated the ship so much that the captain almost feared that she would have floated from her present position, when she must inevitably go down.

After the two boats containing all the passengers, and a few of the ship's company had left him, Captain Landless found, that by the flow of the tide, he and the seamen would be obliged to betake themselves to the maintop, the only part of the rigging which yet remained standing, and which they had reason to he thankful had not been cut away with the rest. The water

now rose over the maindeck, and from its weight and pressure on the vessel widened the opening below, so that she commenced to rock and plunge a little head and stern.

"We shall stand out this tide, I think," said the captain.

"If it does not come on to blow," answered the boatswain; "and for the present it looks well to windward. We shall stand this tide, though our seams begin to open."

"Mr. Manning must soon be here with the longboat," said the captain. "She will be enough for all the hands we have now; and when the jolly-boat returns, she will be able, by the ebb, to get some spirits, rice, and hams."

These being the stores most at hand, and least likely to suffer from the water, which had drowned the whole of the live-stock in the commencement, and washed them overboard very soon after.

From the maintop, Captain Landless watched the return of his boats, and saw with his telescope that Mr. Manning had

pushed off from the island with the first of the ebb, though the currents ran with such violence that he seemed to make but little progress, and he perceived with infinite anxiety, that what the boat gained in two hours hard pulling was more than once lost in a fourth of the time, and that almost within hail of the ship she was drawn back again by opposing currents. It was evident that the men were almost exhausted from such a continuance of exertion, and when the flood-tide began to make against them, though they were then within two miles of the ship, it seemed as if they should be obliged to relinquish the attempt as fruitless.

Confined by a number of small islands which could be plainly distinguished at no great distance from each other, the tides and currents ran amongst them, with almost resistless force; and the tide, as has been already mentioned, was again on the turn, before those on board the boat, though they strained every muscle, could succeed in

reaching the Snowdon. When they did come along side, no time was lost in quitting a vessel, which threatened almost every moment to fall asunder. At high water her hull had been completely submerged; the ebb was proportionably rapid; and as it left the vessel, the water poured out from her sides by a thousand chinks and openings, splashing into the sea around her, and covering her from stem to stern with a multitude of little rills, like the commencement of a heavy thaw after frost.

When the ships company had got into the boat it was discovered that the purser was not amongst them. "Where is the purser!" shouted the captain. "Hollo there! The boat is just going off."

"Looking after his gold, I'll warrant him," answered a gruff voice, "though it will not buy much where we are going."

The captain's calls brought the purser on deck, buttoning up his coat, and holding his hands on his pockets; his foot slid on the slippery boards as he drew near the gang-

way. He staggered, and in his endeavour to save himself from falling, removed his hands from his pockets to catch a rope, and by so doing let some of his treasure escape, which rolled towards the scupper at the gangway. He made a hurried effort to overtake the rolling money, lost his balance, and falling headlong overboard between the boat and the ship's side, went down like a stone."

"Ay, there he and his gold go to the bottom together," said the same voice. The captain looked at Manning, who only answered, "No power on earth can save a man with that weight in his pockets. A sixteen pounder could not do the thing more effectually."

"He is gone! poor fellow," answered the captain. "We can do nothing for him, and our time is precious. We have so little room for provision in this boat, that it is indispensable that we should get the other before the Snowdon goes to pieces. Push off."

The command was instantly obeyed, and they got clear of the rocks notwithstanding the dangerous surf which broke upon them. They had not got very far when a human creature seemed to start up from the deep, and borne by the tide came floating towards them (the head and shoulders out of water), with a sort of dancing motion turning first on the one side, and then on the other, according to the movement of the waves.

"And who is that?" demanded the captain. "I did not know that we had lost any of our people."

"A native Portuguese, who would have sunk us all this morning, in his endeavours to get into the boat, had I not struck him off," answered Manning.

"You did well and wisely, Manning; the loss of this boat, would have been the loss of every soul belonging to the Snowdon."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the helmsman. "without that, we would all have been, where our poor purser is now."

Captain Landless gave his officer the

praise which he thought due, to an act which had not only saved the passengers in the boat, but perhaps the ship's company, though he deeply felt the cruelty of the circumstances which had made such a sacrifice necessary; and as he looked on the unclosed eyes, and dangling arms, floated by the undulation of the waves, of the awful spectacle before him, gratitude for the preservation of so many lives, could alone reconcile his mind to the price paid. Manning, in the steady consciousness of duty, looked on the fearful object but as the seal of its performance. The seamen, accustomed to the Hoogly, were too much familiarized with scenes of the kind to let this make any impression, some of them even passed coarse jokes on the subject, the colour of the skin, causing them to regard the sufferer with as much indifference as if he had been an animal instead of a human creature. Those who were most superstitious, regarded his appearance at that moment as an unlucky omen for them, and in a voice not to

be heard by their officers, related their own experience upon such subjects.

They reached the island, however, in safety, though not until they had seen their deserted vessel go down at one plunge; the wind had risen and caused a greater swell over the rocks, which lifted her from her resting-point, and finished the catastrophe. All hope of further aid was now at an end, and Captain Landless was doubly provoked with the conduct of the crew of the jolly-boat, who had not come to his assistance when they were most wanted.

It was dark long before they reached their little landing-place, to which they were directed by a fire made of dry brush-wood, kindled by those on shore, who had anxiously looked out for their approach.

"Where is the jolly-boat and her crew?" demanded the captain, as soon as he came within hail of those on shore.

"Left the island an hour before dark," answered Dr. M'Alpin, "neither bribe

nor entreaty of ours could make them go sooner."

"The Snowdon has gone to the bottom, and their departure now can be but of little use; they are more likely to lose the boat and their own lives, than be of any service to us," answered Captain Landless.

"That creature did not come out of the water for nothing," whispered one of the sailors to his next neighbour.

"Let the fire be kept up all night," said the captain, "to guide them to the landing-place."

The captain as soon as he set his foot on shore, ordered a general survey of whatever had been brought from the ship, and saw with vexation and anger, the large quantity of useless articles (at least, useless in their present circumstances), which had been taken in place of provisions and fishing-tackle.

In the confusion which had attended their embarkation, many had seized upon articles of their own particular calling; and

it was but in the solitary instance of the cook, who had not forgotten his largest kettle, and perhaps the butcher who had taken his knife and hatchet with him, that such an instinct proved useful. Mrs. Cheapstow's ayah had seized upon her mistress's dressing-glass, which she had brought tied up in her chudder,* and Mirza had got his master's boot-jacks stuck into his sash. Cussim Ali's inability to take any thing, had perhaps been the means of preserving unimpaired his claims to superior thought and consideration. The soldiers and their wives had also brought a variety of odd articles, little available to their present wants.

"What have we here," said the captain, examining a heterogeneous mass of things which could scarcely have been expected to be found on a desert island. "Who has brought all this trumpery, and occupied space which should have been put to better purpose?"

"The native servants," answered the cap-

* Chudder—drapery for the head.

tain's servant, "when once they got a thing in their grasp, there was no making them quit hold, and I doubt there is plunder from between decks amongst the soldiers and their wives, which is of as little use. I have brought your boat-cloak, sir, and your gun—your powder and shot, your shark-hooks and fishing-lines, sir."

"That's a good fellow," answered his master, "these are the things we want. Now, steward, see that our provisions are stowed in one place, and a strict watch kept over them; and in the mean time serve out a small proportion for supper, for those who have had no other food this day."

Cussim Ali guessed the subject of conversation, and hastened to inform his master in Hindostanee, that he had observed a large hole in the rocks, quite dry, and above the water-mark, which would serve the captain sahib for a godown* to keep the "dinner things" from rain if any came.

"A good thought, my black friend," said

* Godown—storehouse.

the captain, when the information was translated to him. "Here, my lads, take torches, examine the cavern, and if it be, what he says, let the provisions be stowed there instantly;" and he added in a low voice to the doctor, "and it will be easier to keep them there, too, from light fingers."

All hands set to work, the cavern was found as Cussim had described it, and the things were removed; the cook proceeded to prepare supper, which consisted of a large kettle of boiled rice, with a few slices of fat ham cut down into it, to give it a relish.

Contrary to his usual habits, Colonel Cheapstow found his supper better than any thing he had tasted for a great many months. The provision was served out to every individual in exact measure, allowing half as much for the children as for the grown persons; and afterwards a small portion of brandy-and-water was in like manner distributed.

This sustenance, slender as it was, served to raise the drooping spirits of the poor islanders, and having lighted several fires to counteract as much as possible the effects of the night air, they prepared to sleep. Dr. M'Alpin and Colonel Cheapstow had, while daylight lasted, collected a quantity of dry grass, and made a kind of couch for Mrs. Cheapstow, who overcome with fatigue and the agitation she had suffered, was no longer able to sit up.

Captain Landless, fertile in expedients, ordered the men to bring up the mainsail and oars from the longboat, with which he constructed a sort of tent to shield her from the weather. Mrs. Cheapstow and her ayah occupied one end of the frail dwelling, Colonel Cheapstow and the doctor the other; while Cussim Ali and Mirza, like mice, hid themselves in the folds of the sail which hung on the ground. The colonel and Dr. M'Alpin, as soon as they found that they were to be lodged in the tent, made over

their boat-cloaks for the use of the women and children, who had no other canopy than the cope of heaven.

Captain Landless and his officers, accustomed to change of place and climate, took upon themselves the duty of sentries, and stretched themselves down, all round the tent.

Nothing occurred to disturb their repose; no noise was heard but the rushing of the waves on the rocky shore, and though Captain Landless often in the course of the night, looked out on the moonlit sea, no trace of the missing boat was to be seen. The beacon-fire had been carefully attended to, and kept burning all night, and when morning dawned without any appearance of the boat, Captain Landless gave it as his opinion, that she must either have struck upon some sunken rock, and gone to the bottom in the dark, or gained one of the other islands.

As soon as dawn commenced, every one was on foot to endeavour to provide, as

much as the nature of their circumstances permitted, for their daily wants.

Captain Landless had determined from the low state of his provisions, to issue but one spare meal a day, and every one's ingenuity was called into exertion, to supply the rest. Some of the men ranged along the shore in quest of what the tide might have thrown up, and were actually so happy as to find a barrel of salt beef, floated from the wreck. This discovery gave them spirits to go through with the fatigues of their search, though the rocks were so sharp, that many had their shoes cut through—a miserable prognostic of what was to come.

Captain Landless had in the mean time employed several of the men to fell a tall tree, which they set up, on the highest point of the island as a flag-staff, and tying all the neckcloths and pocket-handkerchiefs together, fastened their flag thus formed to their mast in hopes of attracting the notice of some vessel at sea.

While this was going forward, and the men occupied in different directions, the Lascars* took the opportunity of jumping into the longboat, when there was none by to prevent them, cutting her cable and pulling out to sea, in hopes of gaining some other land.

Manning was the first, as he returned to the landing-place, to discover the theft; and he snatched the gun out of Dr. M'Alpin's hand, who accompanied him, with the intention of firing on the serang.† The Lascars, aware of their danger, pulled with all their strength, and were out of his reach, before he could bring the gun to bear on them.

"The Lascars are of the caste of rogues," said Cussim, who was following his master. "When was it that they ever lost an opportunity to run away and leave their masters in danger?"

"Our rascally Lascars," cried Manning,

* Lascars—native seamen.

† Serang—chief of the Lascars.

running with the unwelcome intelligence to Captain Landless, "have made their escape, and carried away our longboat."

"Impossible!" said the captain; "they dare not be guilty of such an action!"

"Look there then, captain, and satisfy yourself; there they are pulling with force that nothing but a knavish action would ever make them exert."

The captain looked through the telescope, which he never quitted, and was satisfied that Manning's information was correct, by perceiving that there was not a European amongst them.

"We should have known them better, Manning," he said, "than to have put it in their power to serve us a trick of the kind. They have taken from us the only means we had of seeking for an inhabited place, or of procuring fish to eke out our spare provisions. They have, I trust not, got the mainsail."

"No," said Manning; "cowardly knaves; they were afraid to touch that, I suppose,

though there were only the women there at the time."

"At all events," said the doctor, who by this time joined them, "let us take the comfort our situation will admit: by their departure we have fewer mouths to feed, and the soldiers have lighted on a prize on the shore—a cask of salt provisions."

"That's lucky," said the captain; "we must keep a good look out, Manning, perhaps the next flood may bring us something of the same kind."

Towards evening a sail was seen on the horizon; but notwithstanding the signals from the flag-staff, and all the smoke they could raise, the strange sail stood on without taking any notice of their endeavours.

"At any rate, we are not out of the course of ships," said the doctor. "Let us take comfort from that, Captain Landless; to-morrow, who knows but what we may be more fortunate?"

In the evening the daily meal was again cooked, and dispositions made for passing

the night as before. Cussim Ali, fortunately, found a small fish in a pool, which he broiled on the coals for himself; being too good a Mussulman to allow hunger even to be the cause of his eating rice, that had been polluted by the forbidden ham. Mrs. Cheapstow's ayah was not so scrupulous, though she declared her intention of absolving herself from the crime, and buying back her caste, if ever she lived to return to Bengal.

The next day, and several following, past in the same manner. Many sails were seen, but one after another passed without taking the slightest notice of their repeated signals, probably thinking that the smoke which they sent up, was only made by fishermen cooking on the shore.

Their shoes in a short time were cut to pieces by the sharpness of the coral rocks, and their feet so lacerated and swelled, that dispirited by repeated disappointments, when a ship was seen, very few had spirits to climb to the flag-staff to make the requi-

site signals. Even fishing, more necessary as it was every day, by the consumption of their provisions, became an insupportable task, and nothing but Captain Landless's threat to cut off the allowance of those who did not make the exertion, induced many to bear the torment of the salt water on their excoriated feet.

Their prospects every day became darker and more hopeless, and they began to dread that fear of the currents running amongst those islands, would for ever prevent ships from approaching them. Mrs. Cheapstow had, in the commencement, consoled herself by observing, that her husband's health was visibly amended, and the hope that their residence on the island would not be of very long continuance. Many were of opinion that the lascars, who were well acquainted with the bay, would make the mainland, and by giving information of the wreck of the Snowdon, be the means of sending some vessel to the assistance of her crew, but as day after day passed, the expectation died away. Each

tried to conceal his apprehension from the other, and to talk of hopes which were no longer felt.

Three weeks of torturing suspense had now passed away, and their scanty provisions were almost expended, when one evening, after having made several signals which they believed to have passed without notice, they were surprised by the welcome appearance of a boat pulling round the wooded corner of their island to their little landing-place.

"Thank God!" said Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow in a breath.

"God be praised!" exclaimed the doctor.

Every one crowded down to the pier to greet the new arrivals. They found that the boat was commanded by a European lad, and manned by lascars, and that she belonged to a "country ship," one of the trading vessels between Gangam and Acheen. "Captain Hawser," he said, "had seen their flag, and knowing that the island was uninhabited, had sent him to bring off as many as their boat could contain, and thinking

that they might be in want he had also sent rice and brandy."

"Let the women and children go first, as before," said Captain Landless, "with Colonel Cheapstow, Dr. M'Alpin, and their servants—and I will thank you, young man, to make Captain Landless's compliments, of the Honourable Company's late ship, Snowdon, to Captain Hawser, and say how much I am indebted to his humane attention, and I trust he will make our distresses known to the proper authorities in the first port he may reach."

"Depend upon us for that," said Colonel Cheapstow and the doctor, both speaking together—"if money can procure a vessel, she shall be sent without losing an hour."

"We shall do what we can to get the boat sent back for you, sir, when we reach the ship," said the lad.

"Thank you, my good friend," answered Captain Landless—"I shall be glad to send off several of my people who have suffered in their feet; but it is impossible for me to

leave the island while a man remains upon it."

"Farewell, my brave friend," said the doctor, shaking hands with Captain Landless, "I trust we shall yet meet in the land o' cakes. Fare ye well, Manning, and if government has not a ship to send for you, I will hire one and send it myself, I give you my word."

Fellowship in suffering had made Colonel Cheapstow and Dr. M'Alpin personally acquainted with every man on the island, and they both deposited orders on Calcutta to a considerable amount in the hands of Captain Landless, for the use of his ship's company, who greeted the departure of the boats with loud cheers, waving their hats, and wishing a prosperous voyage to those on board.

When those who were thus unexpectedly released from their almost hopeless captivity had reached the "Eastern Star," and that Captain Hawser was made acquainted with the necessities of those on shore, though his small vessel did not admit of his receiving n

more passengers, he generously freighted the boat and sent her to the island a second time, with rice, sail-cloth, hatchets, saws, hammers, nails, and a part of his own little provisions, that they might be enabled to construct a hut to shelter them from the weather. Fortunately no rain had fallen during their stay on the island; but such drought could not be expected much longer.

The Eastern Star was laid-to, so near the island, that her boat went and returned in a fourth part of the time which had been consumed by those from the unfortunate Snowdon; on her second return she brought Mr. Clairville, and a few of the men whose feet were in a deplorable condition. Captain Hawser gave up his own cabin to Mrs. Cheapstow, and did every thing which circumstances would permit during the three days they were in reaching Gangam, for the comfort of his half-famished passengers.

There was no other vessel fit for sea at the time the Eastern Star reached

but Colonel Cheapstow represented the urgent necessity of those he had left on the island, with such force, that she was taken up on account of government for this service, and Captain Hawser employed men to work night and day in unloading her and getting the stores on board requisite for so many Europeans. The good doctor, in conformity to his promise, spared neither trouble nor expense in procuring whatever could be useful. Mrs. Cheapstow employed all the durzies at the place in making up as much linen as the time would admit, and every British resident made a contribution from their wardrobes for the use of those who were literally in rags. It was determined that the Eastern Star should take the islanders back to Calcutta, and that as soon as another vessel could be got ready for their transport, the soldiers' wives and children should be sent there also.

When all these arrangements were effected, Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow, and the doctor, had leisure to think of them-

selves and their own wants. They had been, the moment their distressed situation was known, most kindly received into the house of an old resident at Gangam, where they only proposed to remain long enough to recover their fatigues, recruit their wasted strength, and get what was indispensably necessary before they proceeded dawk* along the coast to Madras, as the season was so far advanced, that they preferred sailing from that port to Europe, to returning again to Calcutta.

Both the doctor and Colonel Cheapstow left substantial tokens of their gratitude with Captain Hawser at parting. He was the bearer of letters from them to Captain Landless, announcing the arrangements which had been made, and repeating their feelings of gratitude to him, and friendly interest in their fellow-sufferers. Dr. M'Alpin, in writing to Mr. Manning, begged that he would draw whatever money he required while in Calcutta out of the hands of his agent, whose

address he enclosed; and at the end of three days from that on which they entered the port, they had the satisfaction to see the Eastern Star weigh anchor and depart, better provided with food and wearables, than could possibly have been expected in so short a time.

Having such a long land journey to perform, Dr. M'Alpin judged it prudent for Colonel Cheapstow to keep perfectly quiet; and having taken upon himself to make the requisite preparations, he trusted that his friend would be able to undergo the fatigue without material injury. Several days must elapse before the dawk could be laid, and in the mean time he resolved to gratify himself by paying a visit to the celebrated temple of Jaghurnaut.

CHAPTER IX.

——— Th' ascending pile
Stood fixt her stately height: and strait the doors
Op'ning their brazen folds, discover wide
Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
And level pavement: from the arched roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps, and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky.

MILTON.

WHEN Dr. M'Alpin arrived at the temple famous over India for its antiquity and unrivalled splendour, he stood dumb with wonder on beholding such an extraordinary structure, and looked from the roof to the base, as if he almost doubted that

man's labour was capable of accomplishing such a work.

The temple, enclosed by two courts of surprising extent, surrounded by high walls, and pillared verandas round their interior, stands on an immense platform of solid rock: an enormous mass of granite has been, by incredible labour, cut down to an exact level a few feet above the ground for the foundation of this gigantic work. The great pyramid, in stupendous altitude, rears itself gray with the tints of time, in the midst of this enclosure. The centre pyramid over the grand entrance, and the whole face of the temple, is wrought in endless sculpture as far as the eye can reach.

It is impossible by words to give an idea of the imposing magnitude of this mass of building; to show how inadequate description must be, it is sufficient to mention that at a hundred and fifty feet from the ground, the greatest height to which measurement has yet extended, each single stone used in the building has been found to con-

sist of granite blocks of a thousand square feet. The riches of this temple which are reputed to be incalculable, have never been exposed to European eyes, since a Frenchman in the disguise of a native performing penance, contrived to effect an entrance into the temple, and in the night stole a ruby of immense value, one of the eyes of the idol.

Nothing can be more hideous than this frightfully misshapen image of Jaghurnaut, which from superstitious reasons was hewn entire out of a log of wood, which the Brahmins reported to have been by miraculous means landed on their coast.

The doctor, in surveying the place, recognised at a little distance a Brahmin whom he had formerly known at Benares. The regular and finely-proportioned features of this man's face had altogether a lofty and contemplative character, which accorded well with the dignified carriage of his body; his age might be about thirty-six. His forehead and nose were marked down the centre

with nicely-drawn lines of yellow paint, which denoted the caste to which he belonged; his bosom was marked with the same sign, and round his neck hung his brahminee beads, and a small linked gold chain. His dress consisted merely of a piece of white cotton with red ends, passed two or three times round his waist, and hanging down to the knee; with a muslin jacket tight to his shape, and a snow-white turban of the same material.

When Dr. M'Alpin approached, he bent his head in two or three respectful salaams. "The sahib is welcome," he said, speaking in Hindostanee. "We are happy to see him in this place."

The doctor raised his hat after the manner of European salutation; a compliment to which natives acquainted with European manners, are generally very sensible.

"I am happy to see you in health, Krishen," he said; "and much as I have seen of your building in this country, I

never have seen any thing like this—the interior must be equal to the exterior of such a place."

"The sahib would think so, if he could see its splendour with his own eyes—the gold and the silver and the jewels making the night seem like day; and the golden lamps like the stars in the firmament, and the smoke of incense like the clouds of heaven. But the sahib has come in a good time, for to-morrow is the beginning of our great days—the pilgrims will come in, and Jaghurnaut will ride out in his car."

"If to-morrow is the great procession of the pilgrims, Krishen, you could perhaps contrive to let me see the temple. I know that it is not permitted for any one but a Hindoo, by your laws to enter there; still, I know that you are above the belief in all the rules which have been made for the vulgar."

"I would do it for the sahib," answered the Hindoo, "knowing that he has the wisdom and learning of a Brahmin, but my

brothers would look upon me with evil eyes."

"You do not believe that the log of wood set up by man's hands is God?" said the doctor. "I am well enough acquainted with your Shasters to know that they say 'God has no likeness."

"They are the words of truth," answered the Brahmin, "and were written for our caste; but the ignorant who cannot imagine what their eyes have not seen, must have a form to look upon."

The doctor felt the uselessness of arguing with a Brahmin on such a subject; he knew that the man before him considered his own soul, as well as all those of his privileged caste, so many sparks of the divine essence, to be "reabsorbed into the ocean of eternal rest," when they had merited bliss by their lives, or by many transmigrations been cleansed from the sins they had contracted in their mortal pilgrimage.

Dr. M'Alpin could not look upon the surprising effects of man's patient industry

now before him, without something of the overwhelming impression, which overpowers the mind in the contemplation of the grand features of nature. Its magnitude, its elevation, its durability, all joined to heighten the effect, and disposed his mind to consider the might which is in the arm of fallen man, under the direction of his reasoning and inventive faculties, to produce a work so far beyond his apparent strength and duration on earth. A monument reared by the children of a day, which seemed destined to last to the end of time!—if his heart for a moment swelled with a proud thought on the power of the spirit of man, it died within him, and his head sunk on his breast, when the object for which such a temple had been reared, presented itself to his mind. Can man imagine such lofty devices for such an end? Can he whose thoughts seem ready to aspire to heaven—who works not for an hour or for a day, but who lays a foundation, solid as the mountains—broad as their base—and who rears a structure upon it, like them,

capable of defying all changes of weather, and to stand against time, bow down before an idol of his own formation?

The doctor turned from the temple to consider a pyramid near it, not less impressive, entirely formed of the skulls of pilgrims, who, worn out with fatigue, and reduced to the last degree of misery and poverty, had breathed their last there. This ghastly weather-bleached heap rose in white contrast to the dark mass by which it was caused. "Would that these dry bones could speak," said the doctor; "would that these tenantless jaws had a tongue to warn the infatuated benighted multitude from their way!"

"It is a fine sight," said the Brahmin, looking at the bare pyramid of what had once been human heads. "All these children of Adam died here for the honour of Jaghurnaut."

The doctor turned to regard the speaker as if he was looking on him for the first time, surprised that two human creatures could think and feel so differently on the

same subject. He eyed him for a moment as if his glance would say—"Are you not flesh—are you not blood—are you not sensible of human misery, and degradation, and suffering? But it was but for the first moment of lacerated feeling that such thoughts occupied his mind. He well knew that the magic wand of the bloody monster Superstition had changed the most revolting scenes into offerings of pride and pleasure in the eyes of millions of his race. Beyond the spot where they stood, extended a valley, filled with uncollected fragments of what had been lately, living, moving, sentient creatures, amongst which jackals glided even in the light of the sun, and birds of prey fought.

"What is that?" said the doctor, listening to what seemed to him like a faint shriek.

"Nothing," said the Brahmin. "Some bird attacking a man before he is dead."

"God be merciful to us!" exclaimed the doctor, rushing forward, for his perfect ac-

quaintance with native apathy rather heightened than subdued his irritable feelings. At no great distance he discovered a miserable native (lying on the ground where he had been abandoned to die) making feeble efforts to keep off the vultures who gathered round him, and bleeding from the wound which had caused his shriek. At the appearance of a living man, the sullen troop rose, heavily flapping their black wings, and again alighted on a rock at a little distance, where they remained in watchful expectation, stretching their red, bare necks.

Dr. M'Alpin to his great surprise found, that the wretched sufferer, was no other than his own mate bearer, from whom he had parted at Sangor ; his present extreme weakness he found proceeded more from exhaustion than illness, and he was anxious to make an effort for him which he hoped might be successful. The doctor knew that it was vain to expect that the bearers who had brought him to Jaghurnaut would lose their caste by rendering assistance to

any one in such circumstances. While he was considering in great anxiety what it was possible for him to do, some pariahs* arrived to deposit the body of a man already dead, and money easily engaged them in the service of the living. He made them carry the poor creature into the nearest shady spot, as it was not possible to take him into a house, for no native would pollute his dwelling by suffering such a guest to enter it.

Fortunately the doctor found Cussim Ali, with his palanquin-bearers, who knowing his master's ways, was willing enough to assist him in any thing that would not endanger his caste, and at his bidding ran to procure food for Manoorut. There were abundance of stalls at no great distance, where provisions might be obtained for those who had money to purchase it; but the owners, hardened to the fearful spectacle of human misery because they were accus-

* Pariahs—outcasts employed in the most menial offices.

tomed to it at the time of pilgrimage, would not give to any one, without first receiving its full value, a single, grain of rice.

The doctor took the food from the hands of Cussim Ali, and with his own, gave it in the proportion he deemed expedient to the sufferer, who, considering the place from which he had been taken, and the hands which had carried him there, had no right to reject food even from a European.

Manoorut opened his eyes and seemed to recognise his master as he put a particle into his mouth; but though unable to speak, he swallowed his food.

A week before the poor bearer would have died any death that could have been offered to him rather than to have defiled himself by receiving food from a hand of lower caste; though his master was in all other respects, in his eyes, an object to be honoured and almost worshipped, (for he had often called him "His God,") yet in this one particular he considered him as on a level with dogs, and had his "caste not been

gone," by his misfortunes, he would have shut his teeth against the offered sustenance.

The doctor knew the feelings of those who were about him, and told them " that in his profession, he had a right to give medicine even with his own hand, and that many men of the first caste, might take what he had touched." The Brahmin remained at a distance sufficient to prevent his hearing what was said,—he would not even run the risk of respiring the air polluted by a creature in Manoorut's circumstances. Cussim Ali, who hated the whole of his race with genuine Mussulman hatred, did not lose so good an opportunity of declaring his opinion very freely upon the proceedings of the class to which he belonged.

" This is the work of the Brahmins, sahib; this is their good work. I know that though Manoorut left his money with his family, when we came down the river, he had

enough to bring him here, if they had not robbed him. Every pilgrim before he comes into the town of Jaghurnaut must pay a tax, and another to the Brahmins before they can enter the temple. You know, sahib, if many of the poor Hindoos, who come from the farthest end of India, can bear that, after they have eaten all their money on the road. Nine days after, when this uproar is passed, there will be more dead round this pagoda than if a battle had been fought on the ground."

"I know," answered his master, "that for time immemorial, every pilgrim entering the town of Jaghurnaut paid a tax to the Rajah," and he continued speaking to himself as he often did, in English, "which I fear is continued by our government, I have heard people say, for the intention of decreasing the influx of pilgrims.—And what better," he said, turning to Cussim Ali, and again speaking in Hindostanee, "is your

great festival in honour of Hassan and Hussein, when you go about beating your breasts for three nights, and scaring sleep from the world? Are not you as glad to draw blood, and to mark your road with dead, in honour of them, as the Hindoos can be for Jaghurnaut?"

"Oh, there is a great difference, sahib," said the Mussulman, earnestly though respectfully: "Hassan and Hussein were the grandsons of *our* prophet, and great warriors, and fought many a battle, and it is well that their name should be kept up, and it is honourable that men should die for them, but for that log of wood, Jaghurnaut?—the Hindoos are fools, and of the caste of fools, to believe that any man can get good by dying here—but for us—who die fighting with our swords in our hands—Mahomet has said, that the gates of Paradise are open."

Dr. M'Alpin found that his bearer was not at that time likely to increase the num-

ber of victims; he had regained so much of the use of speech as to utter a few words of thanks to his master, who bribed people to carry him to the house of an acquaintance, Lieutenant Armstrong, whom he found was in command of the guard, sent to preserve order during the time of pilgrimage.

At his house the doctor resolved to pass the night, as he would never again have an opportunity of witnessing the tremendous scene which was next day to be enacted, and in the morning his friend accompanied him upon his elephant, taking care to keep clear of the living stream, which with almost as much fury as the Ganges when it has burst its banks, poured into the grand portal of the vast enclosure. Many of those whom long travel and famine had exhausted, borne down by the crowd, were crushed to atoms under the regardless feet of the thronging multitude, all struggling forward as earnestly as if eternity hung upon a point of time.

From a hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand persons were there—all animated by the same desire—all rushing forward to the same object, many of them having come from distant provinces, having borne hunger and thirst, fatigue and exposure in their fiercest extremes, and many too, having added to those natural evils, instruments of torture and varieties of penance, which only Hindoos could devise.

It was impossible to distinguish particular sounds, but the aggregate mass of sound, if it is allowable to use such an expression, the voice of this mighty congregation swelled like the chafing of ocean, and rose and fell with the undulation of the atmosphere, the tread of their feet forming a deep, low, hollow accompaniment resembling the long roll of distant thunder. That temple, like the grave, to which it conducted so many, swallowed up the living stream. There they were lost to the eye, and there too, like the

grave, all were equal; from the moment they had passed under the portal, there was no distinction of caste or of rank, the prince and the beggar, the Brahmin and the pariah, were equal. Let sages say how it is that man, in the lowest depths of his degradation, or in the utmost height of his pride's inflation, still feels that there is a natural equality which circumstances cannot alter, and that miserable and erroneous as his ideas are, he no sooner realizes to himself a supreme presence, than he falls even in his own eyes to the level of his fellows.

"This is no pleasant duty," said Mr. Armstrong, "particularly when the idol commences his procession. It has now been my lot to be here twice, and I hope it may never occur again."

"The scene is horrid, in every sense of the word," replied Dr. M'Alpin; "yet being on the spot one feels curious to see even such an enormity."

When the stupendous car, on which the idol was placed, issued from the massy portal, a shout burst from the eager multitude, loud, deep, and reiterated. Dragged by a thousand ready hands, the ponderous machine slowly moved on amidst the triumphant shouts of frantic worshippers, and the deeper clamour of cymbals, conches, and tom-toms.* The car was constructed upon an enormous framework of strong beams, firmly fastened upon a number of broad low wheels. On this foundation five stages rose in regular succession—these stages, which were covered with coloured silk, gilding, and foil, were decorated with talc chattas, flags, chouries, and flowers, and appropriated to the musicians and dancers, who to the number of several hundreds loaded the car, making the greatest noise which their voices and instruments could possibly effect.

On the pinnacle of the car, or rather pyra-

* Tom-toms—drums.

mid, was placed the hideous misshapen figure of Jaghurnaut, radiant with jewels, which, under the rays of a bright sun, dazzled the eyes of his fanatic worshippers. The shouting of the multitude, and the creeking of the wheels, stifled the groans and shrieks, if there were any, uttered by those whom accident, design, or zeal, had thrown under the wheels of the weighty machine, and it was not until the procession, and the train which followed it, had rolled on, that it was possible to distinguish that it had left fragments on the red earth, which did not belong to it, and which none regarded.

This then was idolatry in its visible form, and these were its real fruits, and this was the appalling worship upheld by those who desired to give the people something tangible and visible within their grasp, conceiving it impossible for them to comprehend infinity.

It was not until the crowd had in some degree given way, that Dr. M'Alpin and

his friend could move from the spot, where they had first posted themselves to witness this extraordinary scene, which the continued noise in the distance warned them was still going forward in all its vigour. The doctor begged Mr. Armstrong to permit his poor Manoorut to stay with his bearers until he should be sufficiently recovered to return to his own home, and he took care before quitting Mr. Armstrong's house the next day, to leave money sufficient for that purpose.

When Dr. M'Alpin rejoined Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow at Gangam, he found that the dawk was laid, and every thing in readiness for their commencing their journey next evening. Their cavalcade would be large, as they had no other means of conveying Cussim Ali, Mirza, and the ayah, but by dawk also. A few indispensable requisites constituted all their baggage,

which also they were obliged to transport by relays of bangy-wallahs.*

* Bangy-wallahs—those who run post with light baggage suspended from their shoulders.

CHAPTER X.

The quality of mercy is not strained:
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed:
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE bearers had been regularly laid, and our friends arrived at Madras without interruption, though greatly fatigued with so long and rapid a journey. They went straight to the house of Colonel Marsden on Choultry plain, who being an old friend of Colonel Cheapstow's, upon hearing of his distress, had written to Gangam to say, that

his house at Madras was very much at Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow's service, though he regretted that duty obliged him to be absent at the time. This Mrs. Cheapstow would have been sorry for in other circumstances; but at present, when she had every thing to get for such a voyage, and Colonel Cheapstow was so unequal to any exertion, she felt she would be more at liberty without even the company of their host. He had kindly left his carriage for her use, so that she could commence operations without loss of time.

The doctor's first object was to secure their passage in the Ruthven Castle, a fine new ship then lying in the roads, which his agent had particularly recommended, and he was fortunate enough to procure exactly the same accommodation as they had formerly had in the Snowdon. He doubly rejoiced in this circumstance, as the prospect

of being obliged to put up with a secondary cabin, while those of less standing might be in the first, had in the morning harassed Colonel Cheapstow. Now the certainty that he would not only be comfortably accommodated, but according to his rank, the good doctor hoped would produce a very favourable effect, and he hastened back with the satisfactory intelligence.

On the island the colonel had valiantly endured every privation without murmur or complaint, and at Ganjam he had shown himself only anxious to promote the comfort of those who had been his brethren in misfortune. Now the case was different; there were no longer urgent claims upon the generosity of his heart, he was going amongst strangers, and few things could have reconciled him to occupying a secondary place where he felt himself entitled to the first.

Luckily the vessel was not to sail for ten

or fourteen days, so that there would be time to replace some of their losses upon the Andamans, and their wants were no sooner known at Madras than the house was filled with native merchants, bringing bales of goods of every description, even of precious stones, which they spread out on the floor in glittering array, whilst they squatted themselves in the midst of their treasures, holding them up and chattering like monkeys. Those accustomed to see the natives of Hindostan, could not help being struck with the feeble and diminutive appearance of the people of the coast; their heads, the craniologists remark, have a greater resemblance in conformation to that of the monkey than any others of the human race.

"Have you got fine sewing cotton?" demanded Mrs. Cheapstow, of a pedler who was eagerly displaying his small wares.

"Fine sewing cotton not got, but best shoe-blacking got," answered the man, at

the same time holding up a cake, as if he thought it a perfect substitute for the article required. "Best Europe writing-paper got —carpenter's rulers got—best 'Eau de luce,' got—Hervey's sauce got—all gentlemens take for beef-estake—Smyth and Nephew's lavender-water got—best book-muslin got.—Take, ma'am, take—something take!" he continued earnestly, stretching out the muslin, and canooing forward on his heels without getting up. "Good muslin, ma'am, fine muslin, ma'am; I cheap price sell,—take—"

"And what is the price of this?" said Mrs. Cheapstow, examining the muslin which she held in her hand.

The native as usual demanded three times as much as he intended to take; wisely considering that as Mrs. Cheapstow was in haste, she would not have much time to waste in making a reasonable purchase.

"Ah, you great rogue," said Mrs. Cheapstow, dropping the muslin.

"No, ma'am, I not one great rogue; what ma'am give, that I take," said he, with an expression which would indicate that he thought himself wise in taking advantage of the folly of those with whom he had to deal. "Take muslin, ma'am, take!"

"But it is not worked," said Mrs. Cheapstow.

"Take, ma'am, take—so good muslin—can get work at Lower Orphan's school."

"He is right, my dear," said Colonel Cheapstow. "I have heard that they do that sort of work beautifully; and since I cannot go with you, I am sure M'Alpin will accompany you this evening. I am afraid of your going by yourself, the Madras horses are not nearly so well broken in as ours in Bengal."

The muslin was purchased, to the great

delight of the pedler, who received about twice as much for it as it was worth, and in the evening, after the sea-breeze had set in, Dr. M'Alpin accompanied Mrs. Cheapstow to the Lower Orphan school, where she wished to have this muslin worked.

When they arrived at the house, they were shown into a large hall where a number of girls were at work under the superintendence of the matron Mrs. Patch. Mrs. Cheapstow stated her wishes, and the mistress called up several of the girls, one after another to show the works they had in hand. They were all country-born, the children of soldiers and sailors, who having lost their parents, and being without provision or friends, were maintained in this institution until they could be married or otherwise provided for.

Mrs. Cheapstow spoke to many of the girls, but with few exceptions found them perfectly ignorant, and in many cases hardly

able to return an intelligible answer in English. "You have an immense establishment here," she observed, addressing the schoolmistress, "what do you do with all these girls?"

"Oh, madam, we marry them, and sometimes when European ladies require it, we let them go out as ayahs, though it is not always that that answers well, either for the mistress or the servant."

"But who do you marry them to?" asked Mrs. Cheapstow.

"Sometimes, madam, to soldiers of the European regiments, and sometimes to country-born men in the bazar.

"But how have they an opportunity of becoming acquainted with such people?"

"Oh, madam, much acquaintance is not necessary. When a man has declared his intention to take a wife, the governor permit him to come here, and choose in my presence, and if the girl does not object,

which is not very common, they are married directly."

"Eleonora," said Mrs. Patch, calling to a girl, who sat with her back to Mrs. Cheapstow, "bring your work here, and show it to this lady."

The girl rose to do as she was bid, and Mrs. Cheapstow saw with surprise, a fair and beautiful European, though extremely pale. She coloured as she drew near, and handed her work for the stranger's inspection.

"How long have you been here?" inquired Mrs. Cheapstow.

"Fourteen years, madam."

"And what is your name?"

"Eleonora, madam."

"Yes, that is your christian name, but what is your surname? Eleonora what?

"I do not know," answered the girl, colouring more deeply. "I never had another name."

Mrs. Patch was occupied in giving orders, and despatching messengers to other parts of the house for patterns and work, so that Mrs. Cheapstow continued her questions without interruption.

"That is extraordinary; and you speak English so well."

"I think, madam, I spoke English when I came here, and I have always liked to learn it."

"But do you then know any thing of your parents? Do you know why you came here?"

"I have been told, madam, that I was brought here from the barrack-room of a European soldier who died in the fort."

"Was he your father?

"I do not know madam, but I think not."

"What reason have you to think so? Do not be afraid—tell me all you know," said Mrs. Cheapstow, kindly; "Perhaps I can serve you."

The girl looked round as if to ascertain that there was no one belonging to the house within hearing, and then said, "I think, madam, I recollect a gentleman whom I used to call papa, and a lady who was my mamma, and I think the lady died. I have some recollection of seeing her lie quite still, and that I cried very bitterly, and some one took me away, but I do not know how; and there was some one too, whom I used to call Joe, but I do not know any thing more. Mrs. Patch used to be angry, when I said any thing about it; and so now I have given up speaking, though I cannot help thinking; and she calls me proud, and all the girls call me proud, and they used to say that Joe was my father's name, but I do not think so."

"And are you happy here?" asked Mrs. Cheapstow, who felt herself deeply interested in so singular a situation.

"Oh no, madam, I am very miserable."

"How? What makes you so? You have

always been brought up here ever since you can recollect, and you have all you can want. What makes you unhappy?"

"I dare not tell you, madam," said Eleonora, glancing timidly towards Dr. M'Alpin, who had listened attentively to all she had been saying.

"I like your work very much," said Mrs. Cheapstow; "stay with it here, while I speak to your mistress."

Mrs. Cheapstow before proceeding further was resolved to have a litte conversation with Mrs. Patch, and she left Eleonora with the doctor, who continued to talk with her, and who was greatly pleased with the good sense of her answers, and the simplicity of her manners.

"That is a European girl," said Mrs. Cheapstow to the schoolmistress.

"Yes, poor thing," was the answer.

"She seems a sensible, good, well-behaved young creature."

"Yes, poor thing," was again the answer.

"That being the case, why do you speak of her with pity?"

"Because, madam, her lot in life has not been the most fortunate, and is not likely to be so."

"Not by any fault of hers?" said Mrs. Cheapstow.

"No, certainly, poor thing, far from it; unless, indeed, pride in her situation is a fault, and I do all I can to cure her of it, though I am free to confess that it is only in one way that it has ever been troublesome to me."

"I am interested about the girl, and I shall be obliged to you, Mrs. Patch, if you will tell me frankly all you know relative to her."

"It's soon done, madam, for I know but little, though I was in the house when she came into it, and from that day to this no

one has ever asked about her, except in the way of curiosity, as you are doing now, madam."

"How strange that such a child should have been so abandoned! But how did she come here?"

"Fourteen years ago, the child was brought to this house out of the barrack-room of a European soldier who died in Fort St. George, and nobody could tell any thing about him, for the king's regiment to which the man belonged had sailed out of Madras roads for Europe, the very day before this happened. It was conjectured that he brought on the illness which caused his death by hard travelling from some other place, to join the regiment for which he was one day too late. He was found dead in the barracks, and this poor thing sound asleep on a little mat by him. She was sent here as a soldier's orphan, and a pretty sweet little creature she was then, as

she is now. She was, I fancy, between two and three years old, and could not speak plain. I asked her what was her name, and she told me, 'Good little Eleonora.' I tried to find out if she knew what was her father's name, but though she spoke of her 'papa,' she did not seem to know any other name. From the child's ways, I do not think the soldier was her father. She had a habit of calling for 'Joe,' as if she was calling a servant; but I kept all that to myself, for the governors said, that she was certainly the man's child; though, as she was very pretty, she had been perhaps much noticed and indulged in the regiment; and though her clothes were fine, they were certainly torn and soiled; and they said they might have been given to her,—and at any rate you know, madam, that the soldiers' wives in this country generally dress their children much beyond their station. But let that be as it will, she has always

had manners different from the other girls, and lately I came to the truth of the matter."

"A European tailor, who came here for work, saw her, and wanted to marry her; the man never spoke to her, but he told me, and it would have been a good marriage for any girl in this house;—but when I proposed it to her, she was ready to go distracted; and I found then that she thinks, and has all along thought that she is a gentleman's daughter. I tried to put the notion out of her head, for as I have already told you, madam, nobody has ever inquired after her; and at all events if she is a gentleman's child, herf ather is dead, or does not want to claim her, and then it is just the same to her, as if she was not; and I have tried much lately to put notions out of her head, which can do no good, but only hinder her establishment in life. Whenever there is any chance of any one coming

here, she pretends to be sick, and tries to keep her bed; that she may not be seen, but we have found out the trick now, and it will not do any longer. I should be sorry to see her unsuitably matched, but to refuse respectable Europeans is nonsense, in her situation. She is a good handy girl, and will be a loss to me, for she has learnt to write for me all the letters that I must write to the governors, and to keep my accounts about the work ;—but it is thought that I do not do my duty, when I do not provide for the young people, as they grow up, but keep them to be burdensome on the establishment."

"Her situation is much to be pitied," said Mrs. Cheapstow. "I feel greatly interested for her, and I should like to take her with me to Europe. I know that European ladi escan take girls into their service from this school, giving proper certificates for the purpose. Will you let her go with me this evening,

and I will take care that she comes back to you at ten o'clock. I should like to see something more of her, before I come to a final resolution."

Mrs. Patch, on this assurance, agreed to the proposal, and also engaged to have the work Mrs. Cheapstow required, finished for her without loss of time.

Mrs. Cheapstow made a sign to the doctor, to whom she commuicated her intentions regarding Eleonora, and having done so, left him to hear the history at his leisure from Mrs. Patch, while she called Eleonora, who had again taken up her work, and asked her, if she would like to go to Europe.

"I should like it better than any thing upon earth, madam."

"Then you shall go with me, Eleonora, and I am sure I shall have no reason to repent the step I am taking."

Eleonora stood looking at Mrs. Cheap

stow while she was speaking, as if unable to credit what she heard. Expressions of kindness or interest were new to her ; many ladies who had come to see the work, had noticed her European complexion amongst so many others of a different hue ;—but, "Poor creature, what will become of her!" "I should not like to be troubled with such an attendant who would require all sorts of European accommodation." "I prefer an ayah who wants nothing of the kind." "Poor creature what is she to do!"—were the remarks which she was on such occasions accustomed to hear.

Mrs. Cheapstow enjoyed her unaffected surprise, merely because it was natural. "Eleonora," she said with a smile, "what are you thinking of?—tell me."

"You are not jesting with me, madam? you are not laughing at me?" said Eleonora, bursting into tears.

"No, my poor child, no certainly," said Mrs. Cheapstow, kindly taking her hand. "I mean exactly what I say."

Eleonora kissed the hand which she held, without speaking, and her benefactress, that she might have time to recover the agitation of her spirits, turned to speak with the doctor, who told her that he was more interested in that poor young creature's forlorn situation than ever he had been in his life. "As to her birth," he said, "there is no doubt of it—she carries the stamp of it in her face and in her sentiments, and with your leave, I would like to make a provision for her, that I do not doubt but she is entitled to."

"My worthy friend," answered Mrs. Cheapstow, "we will talk of all that afterwards; in the mean time I am happy that your sentiments coincide with mine, because I know they will have great weight with Cheapstow. I was in duty bound, you know,

to ask his opinion before I took this step, but we have so little time, that I must even run the risk."

Mrs. Cheapstow then said aloud to Mrs. Patch, who came forward with many curtsies to make her parting compliments: "I shall let Eleonora come back to you as I have promised at night, and stay until we have settled every thing for her remaining with me altogether. Now will you have the goodness to call her."

Eleonora made her appearance at that moment, and Dr. M'Alpin handed Mrs. Cheapstow into the carriage, and the delighted girl after her, and then seated himself opposite to them with great satisfaction, revolving in his own mind, what he would do, for a creature who seemed cast upon the protection of strangers. Her presence prevented him from speaking more with Mrs. Cheapstow on this subject, but the more he saw

and heard her, the more anxious he felt for her future welfare.

Mrs. Cheapstow, who often acted more from the feelings of her heart than the dictates of her head, was happy to find from the little conversation she had with Eleonora, that there was every probability that what she had determined upon so hastily, might turn out to her wishes. She thought she discovered a remarkable degree of truth and simplicity in the answers Eleonora made to all her questions, and was glad to find, because the character accorded with her own, that her disposition seemed candid and confiding. "Since I have never had a child of my own," thought Mrs. Cheapstow, "I shall have pleasure in improving a creature like this; she seems to possess a degree of right feeling which will be sure to repay the labour."

When they arrived at Colonel Marsden's

house, on Choultry Plain, their present home, the first thing Mrs. Cheapstow did, was to go in quest of her husband, and tell him what she had done. She recounted all she had seen, and all Mrs. Patch had told her, and ended by saying—"I took such an unaccountable fancy to the girl, from the moment I saw her, and felt such pity for her situation, when I heard from the mistress of the house, how she was circumstanced, that to save her all future trouble and vexation, I fixed the matter at once, and determined to take her to England with us."

"As your attendant you mean, no doubt?"

"I did at first, when the thought came into my head mean that, but after hearing all that I have just told you, and talking a little with herself, I changed my mind; and thought as we have no children of our own, Cheapstow, we might as well adopt this girl, who is one of the sweetest creatures I ever saw."

"A soldier's daughter, Mrs. Cheapstow! a common soldier's daughter! do you propose that I should adopt a private soldier's child as mine, or suffer you to put her on an equality with yourself? What would the world think, Mrs. Cheapstow?"

"That you are as liberal and beneficent as you have always been."

"Be as beneficent and liberal-minded as you please," answered her husband, hastily interrupting her; "but do not propose to bring the child of such a person into our society, and to our table."

"But you are going upon the supposition that this girl is a soldier's child—I am confident that she is not—when you have seen her, I am certain you will be of my opinion. You know you have always said that you could distinguish birth and blood in whatever disguise you met them."

"So I have," answered the Colonel, "and I was never yet deceived, though it is

not every pretty face which bears that stamp."

"I know your tact that way," answered his wife, "and am willing to stand by it."

Thus challenged, Colonel Cheapstow, who prided himself upon his knowledge in what constituted gentility, independently of fashion or external decoration, gave his arm to his wife and conducted her into the hall where Eleonora was sitting alone. Her dress was plain white cotton without any ornament whatsoever; her bright golden hair parted in the centre, was braided over her finely-formed forehead, and fastened behind in a plait. She rose as Mrs. Cheapstow entered, and courtesying modestly, but without embarrassment, remained standing.

"This is Colonel Cheapstow, Eleonora," said his wife.

Eleonora made a lower courtesy, with the same simplicity as before, and still continued standing. There was in her whole figure

and manner an air of resignation, which to those who knew her story had the appearance of dignified submission, particularly as the extreme paleness of her remarkably clear complexion heightened the general impression of melancholy, the action of her body, and the sound of her voice were calculated to convey.

Colonel Cheapstow desired her to be seated, in the tone of courteous civility natural to him at all times when he did not feel his own dignity encroached upon, and his wife clearly perceived that before he had spoken a quarter of an hour with her new favourite, all his scruples had vanished. She sent Eleonora to her own apartment on pretence of looking for something she wanted, and when she had left the room asked her husband, "what he thought now?"

"That she is a gentleman's child, certainly; there cannot be a doubt of it. There is a carriage of the body, and an expression

of countenance which never sprung from low birth. You observe that this girl has been out of the way of learning any of those things which she possesses in such a conspicuous degree, therefore they must be inherent; her manners have the unpretending simplicity of childhood, and though full of diffidence and respect, there is an innate propriety which flows from birth."

"Now, Cheapstow, you go beyond me; the moment I cast my eyes upon her I saw that she was superior and lady-like, and so did M'Alpin—still I could not be quite certain—I might have been deceived."

"You might have been deceived in beauty, and you might have been deceived in shining pretensions, or in great natural endowments of any kind;—but with her, in the midst of very engaging humility, there is a feeling of self-respect, which comes from an internal conviction, though subdued by circumstances. I think, as you say my dear, as we have no

children of our own, it will be as well to restore an officer's child to her own situation in society."

"Then it is a thing settled," said Mrs Cheapstow, "to your satisfaction, to mine,—to the poor girls', and to our excellent friend the doctor's. Did I tell you that he is as much interested about Eleonora as either of us, and wished to make her independent, by settling a sum for her use."

"That is quite unnecessary my dear—this young person is under our protection now, and you can do what you choose for her, though it was certainly very kind of M'Alpin."

"Yes, and it was done when she was without friends. I have not spoken to him about taking her into our own family—I wished to have your opinion first."

"I shall write to the governors of the orphan school, and signify my wishes to them on this subject, in the mean time you can

make what arrangements you please, as there is no doubt of their granting a ready assent."

Mrs. Cheapstow was as active in carrying her wishes into execution, as she had been prompt in forming them, and spent the rest of the day with Eleonora in getting what was requisite for her proper appearance in her new situation, put into train, but with the assistance of a dozen additional durzees, she hoped to be able to accomplish it all before the Ruthven Castle was ready for sea.

CHAPTER XI.

Eventful day! how hast thou changed my state,
Once on the cold and wintry shaded side
Of a bleak hill, mischance had rooted me
Never to thrive, child of another soil.
Transplanted now to the gay sunny vale,
Like the green thorn of May my fortune flowers.
HOME.

MRS. CHEAPSTOW saw with pleasure, that though her new protegée had received but little education, she had the capacity and disposition which made that little much to her. Eleonora's acquirements were confined to reading and writing, and the knowledge of arithmetic, which enabled her to keep the school-mistress's accounts of work done in

the house. In common with the other girls, she was perfect mistress of all the mysteries of embroidering, which was a considerable source of emolument to the school. Her sedate and contemplative turn of mind found pleasure in reading, and though she had but few books within her reach, she had bestowed more attention upon them than perhaps might have been done by many who enjoy a wider range and greater advantages.

The feeling that she was born in a different sphere, influenced her mind from a very early period, and at an age when other girls are only occupied about the passing hour, she endeavoured to fit herself for the society she thought she had a right to, and which the sanguine spirit of youthful hope promised she should one day enjoy. Her hours of labour had been more, and of recreation fewer than those of any one within the walls. From the time she could read without spelling, an acquirement very rarely made by any of

the other girls, Mrs. Patch employed her in teaching the younger children—in reading aloud upon Sundays, as they had no chaplain, and were too far from church to walk there in the sun; in writing her letters, and in keeping her accounts, and slender as such means of improvement were, Eleonora had profited by them, and early taught by hard necessity, acquired more practical knowledge of self-government than she might have done in a seemingly more favourable soil.

The little knowledge with which every school-girl is acquainted, had been entirely out of her reach—she had lived as much secluded as if she had been in a convent; of the usages of society, and the habits of the world she was utterly ignorant, but her sweetness of temper, and benevolence of mind, produced in her untaught manners the reality of politeness, and her native dignity of feeling and rectitude of intention, supplied, in material circumstances, the deficiency of experi-

ence, at least in the opinion of those who could feel propriety as well as understand it. The head, or where no head is, acquaintance with established rules, will prescribe what is fit to be done on ordinary occasions, but the heart only can dictate what is "virtuousest, discreetest, best," and Eleonora had, by her undisguised manners and singleness of heart, before the day was done, convinced Mrs. Cheapstow that her efforts for the improvement of her protégée would at least be met half way by the grateful endeavours of an affectionate heart.

The dread of being compelled to some marriage, which she could not think of without terror, had lately preyed upon Eleonora's spirits, assisted by climate which lends a tooth to every suffering, and given her mind a tone of melancholy, which it would require time to shake off. "Sorrow is wisdom," or often the shortest road, if not the only one to its attainment, and the humiliat-

ing proposal of the tailor, which had been made some time ago, had first opened Eleonora's eyes to what she could not help considering as the degradation of her situation, though she tried sometimes to recollect that she should be grateful for the protection afforded her, when she remembered the circumstances in which she had been brought to the asylum, but her religious instruction was not sufficient to make such truths clear to her mind, and mere human reason, even in the most enlightened minds, is more disposed to feel gratitude to the instruments by which God dispenses his gifts, than to the Almighty giver.

On the day of Eleonora's being brought to the Orphan's Asylum, Mrs. Patch had questioned the child in hopes of being able to discover something of her parentage, but from that time she had been treated upon an exact footing with the other girls, and no more notice taken of her, until her little ac-

quirements began to make her useful to her mistress. There she got more work to do, and had more intercourse with her, without however any increase of kindness on the part of Mrs. Patch, or consequently of affection on that of Eleonora.

Mrs. Patch was an ordinary person in every sense of the word, and did her ordinary duties in the most ordinary way; she did not wish to take more trouble than she could help, and therefore turned over as much of it as she could to those about her, always endeavouring at the same time to convince them that she meant them a favour by accepting their services. When Eleonora returned to her at night, she easily drew from the happy girl an account of all that had passed, and the things which Mrs. Cheapstow had ordered for her. She had knowledge enough of the world to be certain as soon as she heard Eleonora's description of what her dresses were to be,

that Mrs. Cheapstow intended to introduce her into society.

"You are a lucky girl," she said, "to meet with such friends, and to have such fine things, as a body may say, thrown at you. *I* have wrought here, and toiled late and early for these five-and-twenty years, and brought up one race of children after another, and seen them go out of this house, and nobody ever so much as thought of giving a new gown to me, for all my care and all my attention."

"Yes," said Eleonora, untying a parcel which she had in her hand, "one person did think of it, and here it is, and I hope you will like it, Mrs. Patch."

"Who would not like such a beautiful Europe silk?" said the gratified mistress, holding it up in a full light. "But where did you get it, Eleonora, my dear?"

"A man from the bazar came with a great many things to Mrs. Cheapstow, and

this amongst them, and I happened without thinking to say, how much you would like this silk, and Dr. M'Alpin—you remember the gentleman who was here this morning with Mrs. Cheapstow—said it was a good thought, and desired the man to lay this piece aside, and told me that I might take it you at night; and I was so much obliged to him!"

"It was really very handsome of him," said Mrs. Patch, still examining her present, "and very like a gentleman, and I am sure I am most excessively obliged to him, and I'll tell him so the first time I see him; and to you too, Eleonora, for perhaps if you had not mentioned me just then, he might not have thought of it—I always told you it was well to be thoughtful and attentive, and you see what comes of it," she said, folding up her silk; "and your new friends, too, will think the more of you, for not forgetting the old. I dare say such a genteel, gentlemanly

man as the doctor, thought a great deal more of you, when he heard you speak of me, who have always been so kind to you."

Eleonora went to bed, to think over all the last day had produced for her; and when she found herself alone, surrounded by the objects she had known from infancy, could hardly persuade herself that it was not all a dream, and many times during the night she awaked with a start, and asked herself if it were indeed true, that she was to leave India and actually embark upon the blue sea she had so earnestly desired to cross, when she had heard Europeans talk of England, and call it "Home." She felt proud that she two was entitled to call it by that name,—it was the land which had given birth to her parents, and she taxed her memory to recall all she had ever read or heard, of a country which in her mind was the soil of every thing great or good.

The morning brought with it a thousand

new and anxious wishes; expectations had never before disturbed the monotonous round of her life, now her first hope was to see or hear from Mrs. Cheapstow, but the day passed without either message or visit, and another, and another after it. No time in her whole life had ever appeared of such an insupportable length. She thought when the sun rose, that he was going to remain for ever above the horizon, and when he set that he would never return again. The novelty of her hopes made their disappointment more bitter, particularly as Mrs. Patch had in a manner released her from her usual occupations, and left her at liberty to watch every hour on the clock, and to listen to every carriage which passed the road.

At length the almost despaired-of message did arrive, in the form of a note to Mrs. Patch, telling her that Colonel Cheapstow had settled every thing with the di-

rectors, of which she should have official intimation, and that Mrs. Cheapstow would come at sunset to take her young charge away. There was also a note enclosed for Eleonora, and a change of clothes was sent, which Mrs. Cheapstow desired she would put on and distribute whatever she possessed among her companions.

Eleonora's slender possessions were soon disposed of; there was nothing she wished to retain, but the little frock in which she was brought to school, and which, when she put on the dress of the house, Mrs. Patch had laid aside, in hopes that if any inquiry was ever made after her, it might be of service. She also wished to keep a few of her best patterns for embroidery, as she told Mrs. Patch now she would have nothing else to do but to work for Mrs. Cheapstow all day long. She took a kind farewell of those with whom she had so long eaten of the same bread, and drank of the same cup.

promising to write from England, and to send remembrances to every one of them. She dressed herself in the apparel which had been sent, and then sat down at the window which commanded the best view of the public road, to watch for Mrs. Cheapstow's arrival, but she was so much before the time, that after listening and waiting for a whole hour, she mounted to the top of the house, whence she actually discovered a carriage, which she easily recognised to be the one for which she was so anxiously looking.

Mrs. Cheapstow had brought with her a quantity of toys and little trinkets, which she gave to Eleonora to bestow among her young companions, who were perfectly transported with such marks of notice as no one had ever bestowed upon them before; while she settled all with Mrs. Patch, and paid for the work done, at the same time making a present to her on Eleonora's account, which disposed the schoolmistress

very much to rejoice in the good fortune of one whom she said she always thought would come to something.

Human happiness even when it has attained its utmost terrestrial perfection, is more like sorrow than joy,

> In both we lose the balmy bliss of sleep,
> In both we fever, and in both we weep:
> In this alone the likeness disappears—
> That joy's for moments, and that grief's for years.

And poor Eleonora's, as was natural, was a mingled feeling, and her tears fell fast at the final adieu, as she felt that she was leaving the only abode she had ever known; but such is the inconsistency of even allowable human feelings, that they would have fallen still faster had she been told to remain.

When they were seated in the carriage, Mrs. Cheapstow questioned Eleonora, as to what she had been doing during the last three days.

She blushed deeply, and answered, "No-

thing; for indeed I was afraid, madam, that you had forgotten me, or repented of what you had done, and I never was so miserable in my whole life."

"No?" not when they were going to make you marry the tailor?"

"No, I think not; for then I had no hopes to be disappointed, and I resolved, if they should kill me, not to comply."

"I did not know that you could make such strong resolutions."

"Nor did I until that time," answered she with the utmost simplicity.

"Well then, we shall let the subject rest; and since it is so disagreeable to you, let it never be mentioned again. But while I recollect it, there is another thing I have to say to you—it is the custom in Europe for every one to have a surname, and I intend to call you Eleonora Cheapstow, and strangers in place of calling you Eleonora, will call you, Miss Cheapstow."

"I shall like that very much, madam. I know, at least I have heard, that every body in England has two names; but a great many of the girls in our house, have only one."

Mrs. Cheapstow was delighted to observe, the first time that she produced her *protégée* amongst strangers, that she acquitted herself with great propriety. Eleonora had been accustomed to retirement, but not to solitude; therefore felt no sort of awkwardness in being amongst those with whom she was unacquainted, particularly as she was without a tincture of the vanity, which could make her suppose for a moment that she was an object of attention to them. She answered the questions which were addressed to her, with the open simplicity of childhood.

"The creature is so guileless," thought Mrs. Cheapstow as she watched her words and actions, "that it will be easy to make

her every thing, that others would wish to appear."

Dr. M'Alpin had, as he declared, liked her bonny face and sweet manners, from the first moment he set eyes upon her; and every day as he had an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with her, but increased the predilection.

Colonel Cheapstow's health was often so uncertain, as to keep him for days together almost entirely on his couch; and when he was not too ill to be incapable of any alleviation, he usually occupied a sofa in the room where Mrs. Cheapstow and Eleonora superintended the durzees, whose utmost diligence was hardly sufficient to get all the additional work that was required of them, ready before the sailing of the ships.

Eleonora read to him when he could bear it, or did any thing she could think of to amuse him, and while away the hours

of pain and suffering, as it was impossible for his wife who had so many things indispensable for his comfort to procure, to be as much with him as she could have wished, and would have been in other circumstances.

Eleonora had, almost from the hour she came into his family, attached herself to his service with the attention of a dutiful child, conduct which, as it proceeded from the feelings of the heart, greatly endeared her to the friends by whom it was witnessed.

Before leaving Madras, both the doctor and Colonel Cheapstow had the satisfaction to receive letters from Captain Landless and Lieutenant Manning from Calcutta; where Captain Landless informed them they had safely arrived after a tedious passage against the monsoon, having only lost five men from sickness,—a thing, he said, unheard of after such sufferings; and they were now on the point of embarkation in the first

ships for Europe. He concluded by hoping to have the pleasure of meeting them all in London, at no very distant date.

Manning wrote to thank Dr. M'Alpin for the order upon his agents, which the doctor had sent him; declining at the same time to make use of it, as he informed Dr. M'Alpin that upon his arrival in Calcutta he found he had more money of his own in his agent's hands than was sufficient for his present purposes. These letters were followed by one from Mr. Curzon, who sincerely sympathized in the dangers and losses of the friends in whom he was so much interested—Captain Landless had dined with him, and given him a particular account of all their sufferings—Major Middleton was in the habit of coming almost every evening to dine with him, and hear what intelligence he had received of "his good friend the doctor." Young Ouseley, he told them, had left him to join his corps in the upper

provinces—Mrs. Harvey was still reposing on her couch, and Mr. Ascot's eight children running about wild just as usual.

"I hae gotten a house for you, Eleonora," said the doctor, one day when he returned home to tiffin, "which will serve ye for the next four months; and I hope that ye are ready to take possession, and that your trunks are packed, for to-morrow morning the Ruthven Castle's anchor will be up."

"To-morrow morning! Dr. M'Alpin, is it possible—am I really to leave India?—how curious, that to-morrow night I shall sleep upon the sea."

"What cabin have you got, doctor?" inquired Mrs. Cheapstow.

"One of the booby hatches, just opposite to yours. I have told them to make it comfortable for our little lassie, and I just stepped into a cabinet-maker's, as I came through the Black Town, to order what was wanted, and I got a nice little hanging-

bookshelf with doors to keep your books from rolling about, Eleonora; and I got some books too for you to read, ye ken ye mustna be idle."

"And did you take all that trouble for me, Dr. M'Alpin? I should like to read night and day, that I might learn something of what every other person knows."

The morning came and Eleonora saw the time of embarkation to which she had looked as the commencement of a brighter era in her life at length arrive, and for the first time she actually stood on the very brink of that sea, which she had often feared would be to her for ever an impassable barrier, and she listened with dread to the hoarse murmurs of the formidable surf which ran along the shore, breaking in deafening clamours on the beach, and casting up all it encountered on its way "high and dry," as the seamen expressed it.

Going through the surf, which for several hundred miles runs along the Madras coast, is, even to those best acquainted with it, always an operation of danger, and to strangers, an exceedingly formidable undertaking, particularly in going out to the ships in the roads; as, in consequence of the violence with which it breaks, they cannot lie near the shore, and no boats, but the frail craft of the country, constructed of bark sewed together, which yields in a manner to the weight of the water, have ever been able to weather the surf. Possibly something may also be due to the boatmen, who, bred from infancy to the profession, know the exact place and moment when the swell will break. Every ship's boat which has tried it has been swamped in the experiment, and many experienced seamen lost, notwithstanding the catamarans which follow every boat that crosses the surf, to be at hand to

pick up the passengers should the boat go down, an accident, which the slightest neglect or oversight invariably occasions.

These catamarans are nothing more than two boards lashed together, and rowed by two men with short paddles, which they move alternately, first on the one side and then on the other, so as to produce a very droll effect, singing all the time.

It is difficult to conceive a more busy and noisy scene than Madras roads, when there are many ships at anchor, from the immense number of these small craft, mounting, like cockle-shells, on the foaming surfs, which in regular succession break along the shore. The men who navigate them are the letter-carriers and messengers between the ships and the town, and often go backwards and forwards when nothing larger dare venture through the surf. When a wave washes these "catamaran-jacks," as the sailors have named them, from their seats on their skiffs, they yield

to the fury of the water, and, as soon as it has passed, like ducks who have dived for a moment, leap upon their catamarans and recommence singing their own song, which is peculiar to the whole amphibious race, with perfect composure, until the next wave washes them off.

The accommodation-boats, intended for the conveyance of ladies, get their name from their having a seat at one end covered with an awning, and a board to keep the feet out of the water, which leaks into these spongy vessels so as to require incessant baling. That for our friends was in readiness upon the beach above the high water mark, wherein they soon seated themselves, and were waiting for the boatmen, who were slowly sauntering along the beech, "Look at those fellows," said the doctor, "I cannot help laughing when I mind what happened on that very spot when I arrived here a

ffin* thirty years ago. Two of my coun-
men belonging to a Scotch regiment had
t landed, a highland and a lowland officer,
l I overheard the highlander ask his
end, pointing to a turtle which happened
be lying on his back and flapping his fins
the sun, 'What na kind o' a bird ca' ye
?'—'I dinna ken,' answered the low-
ader, 'but he maun be a pet for his wings
e clippit.' I never laughed more in my
e; but here our fellows come at last."

The crew seized the boat by the prow
d dragged her with great rapidity down
e steep bank over the sand into the water,
d then jumping in themselves, without
sing an instant, seized the oars, and all
outing together, "Ullah! Ullah! Ullah!
Ilah!" rowed with their utmost energy,
d shot through the first surf. When it
d passed under them they lay-to for a few

* A term applied to those who have not been a day
a year in this country.

minutes in the hollow of the sea, chanting a few notes as if to keep them in time, but all the while keeping a watchful eye upon the second surf, and as soon as the favourable moment presented itself a second dart was made, and they cleared it, and the catamaran-jacks who had been washed from their seats, regained their rafts which were dancing about in the swell.

"There's a fine fellow," said the doctor, observing one of them who seized his vagrant catamaran and jumped into his seat as easily as a dragoon would have done into his saddle. "There's a fine fellow, and well worthy of the medals he wears."

"Yes," answered the head boatman, who spoke a little English; "he has done a great deal of work in his life: every medal round his neck was given to him for a life saved in the surf."

"But he'll no go without his reward," said the doctor, "when we reach the ship."

Another roll carried them clear off the surf without accident, and the boatmen took up their monotonous song, which they chanted without further interruption. When they reached the ship, both gentlemen took care that all those who had followed them through the surf should be liberally rewarded, as an encouragement to them to attend upon other boats, where their assistance might be really requisite.

Colonel Cheapstow, ill as he was before he left Madras, had still taken care to replace the comforts which had gone to the bottom of the Andaman's, and after he had been a few weeks at sea, gradually recovered the health he had lost upon that unfortunate occasion, and before they had rounded the Cape, had gained as much in appearance as he had in strength.

Dr. M'Alpin's principal pleasure on board ship had been to assist Eleonora in her reading; he had, as he told her before they came

on board, purchased several books expressly for her use, and had infinite satisfaction in instructing her in history and geography—knowledge which had not before come within her reach, and which to a mind like hers was as interesting as it was new.

"Good sense and right feeling," he used to say to Mrs. Cheapstow, "are worth all the accomplishments in the world. Let Eleonora just cultivate the powers of mind which nature has given her, and obtain worthy objects to exercise her thoughts and reasoning faculties, and she will be worth a bushel of those who pride themselves upon what they call their accomplishments—not that I am an enemy to accomplishments neither, but in our day too much is sacrificed to them."

"You must not forget," answered Mrs. Cheapstow, "that Eleonora is now our child and that both Cheapstow and I love her as if she really were so, and that we would wish

that she should make the appearance in society which is indispensable, and I must certainly, as soon as we are in London, give her masters."

"But dinna forget that Eleonora is now passed the age when these things are begun, and it would be a great pity to lose the time which at present she can put to much better purpose; at all events, if she were mine I would not try to teach her any of these things unless she showed a very particular inclination for them; genius, as people call it."

"But it will be expected," joined the colonel, "that Miss Cheapstow should have a more elegant education, more suitable to her situation in life."

"There is nothing so suitable for every body's situation in life, as to know how to conduct themselves rightly in it, and I will just go back to what I first said,—if ye had got Eleonora when she was little, there is no

reason why you should not have taught her whatever you liked; but now it would be wasting her precious time, to begin with such things; and she has a mind, that will do honour to any situation, and procure more respect for her, than all the shining acquirements in the world."

"That would be the case, my excellent friend," replied Mrs. Cheapstow, "if the world were half as good or as wise as you are; but that *not* being the case, we must, if we would keep our situation in it, sacrifice something for the taste of the times;—now I agree with you in thinking that it will be better not to plague Eleonora with accomplishments, unless, as you say, she should show a genius for them."

"Eleonora is a good, dutiful girl," said the colonel, "and I am perfectly pleased with her as she is; but I would wish at the same time that she knew those things which would place her upon a proper footing in the

opinion of others—however, do as you please my dear, you are a better judge of what is fit for girls."

"And I will in the mean time keep her at work just as usual," said the doctor. "Her improvement is a pleasure to me, and sometimes brings back to my mind what my sister was at her age. With the exception of a sweet voice which could sing our ain bonny Scotch songs well, she had no more accomplishments than this poor lassie, though she had more book-learning."

"Having no children I have never perhaps bestowed the attention upon things of the kind that I might otherwise have done," said Mrs. Cheapstow, "so follow your own plan, doctor."

Eleonora's days and weeks passed with pleasure and improvement, and in proportion as her mind opened to receive new ideas, she became more cheerful. Brought up in circumstances to force care even on childish

vivacity, and in a climate unfavourable to the flow of animal spirits, which is in young and active minds the almost constant concomitant of unimpaired health, melancholy had become in a manner the habit of her mind; and the good doctor, conscious, as he said, that there was "a time for all things," laboured to dispel a feeling which he regarded as injurious and premature.

"Let her have a fresh flow of ideas," he said to Mrs. Cheapstow; "let her read and know something of what has been done in the world, and the dark fogs, which till this time have bounded her horizon, will disappear. I like cheerfulness in young creatures, as much as the sun in spring. Melancholy is the rust of the mind, and poisons the springs of health;—there are shadows enough to every scene in this world, without dwelling on them at her years."

CHAPTER XII.

How welcome from the dizzy mast,
The watchful seaman's stand,
Sounds o'er the billow and the blast
The joyful cry of "Land"—
Which veiled within a misty shroud,
Lifts o'er the wave its peak of cloud!

J. MALCOLM.

"You have never seen a mountain, Eleonora," said Dr. M'Alpin as soon as he heard that land was in sight, "come with me on deck and I will show you one."

"That is a cloud," said Eleonora, straining her eyes in the direction he pointed out to her.

"Look again," he said, "through this telescope and tell me now what you see."

"An immense dark mass appearing above the clouds."

"Ay," answered the doctor. "Those are the mountains, then, of St. Helena."

Every moment as the vessel held on her swift and steady way the features of the island became more visible—the outlines more distinct—the lights and shadows more defined, and the peaks separated from each other, showing range within range, while Eleonora beheld with wonder nearly approaching to awe, the extraordinary productions of nature, which, from the rapidity of the vessel's motion, seemed almost to start out of the water before her.

Neither verdure softened, or herbage shaded the bare bald forehead of these stupendous rocks, where they rose in barren nakedness and freshness as if recently torn asunder by giant power and exposed in

all their inaccessibility to the war of the elements and force of the ocean. In vain the waves rolled in ceaseless succession on their immovable base, and broke in white spray on their rugged face, filling their flinty fissures with myriads of trickling streams, there was but one spot in the whole circuit of that stone-bound island where any communication could take place between the sea and the shore, and that spot was the little bay joining the narrow valley in which James Town lies.

When the Ruthven Castle came within gunshot of the formidable batteries which crown every point to which the labour of man has sculptured a path, a gun pealed over their heads like a messenger from a higher sphere commanding them to bring to, until it was ascertained that there was no disorder on board to prevent their approach. When this necessary ceremonial was passed, they stood in shore, and soon

came to anchor in face of the town which lay in a long straggling slip up the narrow valley at the head of the bay, the entrance guarded by strong fortifications and guns of heavy metal. *Ladder hill*, which takes its name from the zigzag route, which incredible industry, has graven on its otherwise inaccessible sides, stands sentinel on the right of the landing, wreathed with cannon, sufficient to blow any ship out of the water, which dared to approach without permission given. The left of the little harbour is also defended by the same formidable artillery. Imagination cannot picture any thing more imposing than the appearance of these rocky mountains, their rugged feet washed by the open ocean, and their bare summits crowned by the engines of death, able to discharge their shafts like the bolts of heaven, from an elevation which makes retaliation or resistance equally hopeless.

Eleonora could not define her feelings as she gazed upon this scene. It suggested ideas new, and delightful, and with the earnest anticipation of unbroken hope, she longed for a nearer examination of a place, which had attracted more of her attention than any other had ever done. Her mind had lately opened to the reception of ideas whose novelty deepened their impression; she felt the world to be full of beauty, and magnificence, and grandeur, and she believed that if she could inspect it more minutely, she would find it more lovely. Dr. M'Alpin had, perhaps without intending it, brought forward this latent feeling; for enthusiasm naturally elicits a corresponding emotion in those minds where nature has placed it, dormant though it may have remained. His poetic taste had not, in his ordinary intercourse with the world, found much room for indulgence; his excellent friends, Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow, with

whom so many years of his life had been passed, laughed at this as one of his little weaknesses.

Though both good people in their own separate way, the *beau-idéal*, natural or moral, made no part of their speculations; consequently the worthy doctor was much delighted to find that in Eleonora he had a pupil who would hear all his opinions without criticism, and take pleasure in his readings and recitations, and listen with unwearying attention to his descriptions of the beauties of his own country, which he promised himself great pleasure some day in showing her. To those who have no experience of how the doctor's life had passed at a distance from his own family, and from the society of young people in general, it may seem strange, that at his years, he should feel such a lively interest, without any selfish motive, in a creature of Eleonora's age, or at least that he should choose

her as the participator of his favourite fancies, but so it was; and Mrs. Cheapstow often laughingly declared to her adopted daughter that she would be jealous of her regard for Dr. M'Alpin.

As soon as the vessel was at anchor, the passengers prepared to go on shore; fortunately for the lovers of the picturesque, they had a general officer amongst the number, who landing in full uniform was received with the salute due to his rank; the guns boomed overhead, and wreaths of white smoke and multiplied echoes ran round the mountains. They landed on a little quay cut out of the rock, the steps of which are wet and slippery from the continual breaking of the surf. On the left of this landing-place a large cave hollowed out of the rock which towers above, and bedded by hard white sand, affords the only bathing-place on the island.

Landed on the beach our party stopped

for a moment to regard the formidable line of cannon extending across this single inlet. It was impossible not to admire the curious mixture of rural quiet and military strength joined to the most remarkable neatness and economy of space. Where a habitation could be planted, or a garden excavated, the encroachment has been made, and they hang over each other in terraces covered with trailing plants. In all other places, nature seems freely to have afforded surface for the habitation of man; in St. Helena, alone, he seems to be an unwelcome intruder upon her particular domain.

Colonel Cheapstow, with his family, walked up to one of the principal boarding-houses, and soon secured accommodation for the time they were to remain on shore. In a place like James Town the arrival of Indiamen, either from England or India, is too important an event not to be generally known, and Colonel Cheapstow and Dr.

M'Alpin had not been an hour in their new lodging, before they received visits from the principal officers in the garrison, and numerous hospitable invitations.

Amongst these visitants was a handsome young man in a naval uniform, who as soon as the ceremonies of introduction were over, addressed the doctor:

"I was in hopes, sir, when I heard your name, that you were from Bengal, but I find your ship is from Madras."

"We are last from Madras, but who of my name do you inquire for in Bengal?" answered the doctor, earnestly gazing upon the open and expressive countenance before him. "I think I should know your features," he said with some emotion, "but who do you inquire for?"

"Dr. James M'Alpin, the brother of my mother."

The doctor rose, and folded the young man in his arms. "And is it even so?" he

said. "I could not be mistaken in the features of my sister's son; this is a happiness I little expected. And what am I to call you? Are ye Hugh, the eldest?"

"No, my dear uncle," answered his nephew, warmly returning the doctor's cordial grasp. "I have not that good fortune. I am but the laird's brother, plain Malcolm Sinclair, or if you like it better, Lieutenant Sinclair of his Majesty's ship Sea-flower."

"Mrs. Cheapstow, Miss Cheapstow," said the doctor, turning to the ladies, who had quietly enjoyed this mutual recognition; "Allow me to present to you my sister's son, my nephew, Lieutenant Sinclair."

Mrs. Cheapstow felicitated both uncle and nephew on their fortunate meeting. Eleonora courtesied to the stranger, and told the doctor in a low voice how happy she was in an event which would give him so much pleasure. Colonel Cheapstow shook hands with Mr. Sinclair, whom he said he could

not consider as a stranger, being so nearly connected with one of his oldest, and dearest friends.

The young man, happy in the discovery he had just made, received the kindness of his new friends with the open frankness of an affectionate heart, and the gentlemanly ease of an independent character.

Mrs. Cheapstow, who was an attentive observer of what had passed, saw at once that the doctor had not only found his sister's son whom, if he had been different to what he appeared to be, he would rejoice to find, because he could call him by that epithet,—but a nephew who was worthy of affection for his own sake, and whose manners and appearance were equally prepossessing. Mrs. Cheapstow had remarked the expression of his countenance, and the tone of his voice when he spoke of his mother, and heard her mentioned by his uncle, and she felt convinced, that at that moment his heart

rejoiced in seeing the brother of his beloved parent, whom he was prepared to love and respect.

"In this youth, at least," she thought, "he will have one relative who will see more merit in him than his immense fortune, and I am happy to think, that there is at least one in his family who resembles himself. If we had the good fortune, Cheapstow," she said, "to have such a son as that to meet us, how different would be our return to our native land!"

The doctor and his nephew had retired to give and receive intelligence of domestic concerns, and did not again make their appearance until the hour of dinner, when the doctor as usual handed Mrs. Cheapstow to table, leaving Eleonora to the care of his nephew. They dined at the *table d'hôte* of their own house, where there were several strangers, Colonel Cheapstow taking his

place as he always did between the ladies of his own party.

Dr. M'Alpin, as soon as he was seated, began speaking to Mrs. Cheapstow of his nephew, in whom he seemed to fancy he had recovered his lost sister.

"Would you believe it, Mrs. Cheapstow," he said, "I had not been half an hour with that boy, before I began speaking to him, as I used to do to his mother? I could not help thinking that my own dear Marian was come back to me. His sentiments and his expressions are just hers; he is something older, to be sure, than she was when we parted, but the likeness is wonderful—he has her generosity of feeling, and warmth of heart, and he seems too, to have steadiness and judgement above his years, though we must not altogether look for an old head upon young shoulders."

"Nothing," replied Mrs. Cheapstow, "for a long time has given me greater pleasure than this meeting, doctor. Cheapstow

agrees with me in thinking that in this young man your sister has left you a valuable legacy."

The doctor regretted the impossibility of his nephew's accompanying him to England, as he belonged to one of the ships on duty in the roads, but which was soon expected to be relieved, when it was probable she would return to Britain.

Malcolm Sinclair had in the mean time been entertaining Eleonora with an account of all that was to be seen in the island.—"You must visit Longwood, Miss Cheapstow," he said, "and make a pilgrimage to Napoleon's grave."

"I hope we shall," answered Eleanora, "your uncle talked of it before we landed."

"Oh, if it depends on him," said Malcolm," "it will soon be settled, I shall not let him forget it. What do you do to-morrow?"

"Go to the governor's, I believe, for there is an invitation for us."

"I know General and Mrs. Monkland,

perfectly well, and I have a general invitation to the house," replied Malcolm, "therefore I shall have the pleasure to attend you; and next day, if there is nothing better to be done, we must beat up the island for conveyances, and set forth on our excursion. I assure you it will repay you for your trouble."

"I have not the least doubt of it," answered Eleonora, who found herself talking with as much freedom to the doctor's nephew as she had been in the habit of doing lately with himself. "I have earnestly wished to see this island, since Dr. M'Alpin described it to me, and have been delighted with it from the first moment we came in sight of its rocky shores. These are the first mountains I have ever seen, and yet, when I did see them, they brought back something to my mind like a dream, as if I had known such things before."

"Some minds are made to receive power-

ful impressions of the great beauties of nature, and give back the reflection like a mirror. I suppose Miss Cheapstow, that is the case with you?"

"I wish it may be so," answered Eleonora, unconscious of the implied compliment, "for then in this beautiful world I shall have pleasure without end."

The air with which Eleanora spoke, had the stamp of such perfect sincerity that her auditor could not help wondering where she had lived, to have such expectations. He was accustomed to the frankness and simplicity of many of his own countrywomen, who in the retirement of their straitened domestic circle, rarely imagine any thing but the *beau-idéal* of human nature—but such entire want of knowledge of the world he had never before met with.

"You must have seen a great deal of India, Miss Cheapstow?" he inquired.

"No; since I can remember, literally

nothing. I do not know that twice in my life I was ever out of the compound of our house at Madras. I saw the sea from the top of the house, and oh, how often and how earnestly I have wished to be a bird, and to fly over it, and see what was on the other side; or to be in one of the ships that ran along so beautifully!"

Malcolm's curiosity was greatly excited by this account of absolute seclusion, but he felt it would be taking an ungenerous advantage to satisfy the desire he had by asking further questions, and he resolved to restrain it, until he had an opportunity of talking with his uncle.

When that was the case, in the course of the evening, he received a full detail of al the particulars known and conjectured, regarding poor Eleonora's mysterious fate, and with the spirit of his years, was highly delighted with the part Mrs. Cheapstow and his uncle had acted in the first instance,

and Colonel Cheapstow in the second. The idea of her marrying in such circumstances, was sacrilege in his eyes, and he was almost disposed to quarrel with any one for repeating such a presumptuous absurdity. This history lost nothing by being told by the doctor, nor did he forget to recount the amiable traits he had observed in Eleonora's character, in support of his opinion that she was by birth a gentlewoman, and he concluded by saying, "There is a purity in her mind which is not often found in any situation, and is least of all to be looked for where she came from; but it just teaches us, Malcolm, that nature will not be at all times broken down, or rooted up by circumstances. She sees every thing in the pure light of her own guileless disposition, and expects all things to be without spot."

"I think," answered Malcolm, "that our dispositions form a kind of medium of vision, if we may use the phrase, through

which we see the world, and every thing in it—the different lights within, colour the objects without."

"There is no doubt of it, Malcolm, and it is only experience which undeceives us."

Next morning, the governor, according to his promise, politely sent one of his carriages to convey his expected guests to his seat, at some miles distance from the capital of his sea-girt isle. Eleonora had been up at an early hour to mark the singular appearance of the rising sun, which Mr. Sinclair had described to her. The valley, or rather ravine, in which James Town stands, is so narrow and deep, that the bright rays of the morning sun gilt the mountain-tops overhead, while it was night in the town below,—a peculiar and picturesque effect, which is perhaps only to be witnessed in St. Helena.

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THE

NABOB AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.

The gaudy gloss of fortune only strikes
The vulgar eye: the suffrage of the wise,
The praise that's worth ambition, is bestow'd
By sense alone, and dignity of mind.

ARMSTRONG.

As soon as breakfast was over the party set forth, Colonel Cheapstow and the ladies occupying the carriage, Dr. M'Alpin and his nephew attending them on horseback, and riding up by the windows to reassure

Mrs. Cheapstow, who had been so long accustomed to the level roads of India, that she was terrified at the sight of the precipitous route which lay before them.

Every road in the island, has been cut with infinite labour round the steep sides of the mountains, overhanging deep valleys, without even a parapet to stand between the timid traveller and the streams which roar below. Eleonora looked out with eager curiosity upon the striking changes which every turn of the road placed before them, and the romantic little villas scattered about on the bosom of the mountains, and wondered how Mrs. Cheapstow could rejoice in coming to the termination of so charming a ride.

When they did arrive, they found the whole family at home to receive them, and much pleased at finding Mr. Sinclair of the party. The house is large and low, having all its apartments on the ground-floor, surrounded with trellis-work, and covered with vines; the garden into which several of the

windows open, is well shaded by vines and flowering shrubs, though there are but few trees on the island.

Mrs. Monkland and her daughters took more trouble to entertain their visiters than could perhaps have been expected in a situation where the arrival of strangers was more frequent. At one time during Napoleon's life, when there was a larger armed force on the island, and several ships of war in the roads, there had been a greater variety in the society of the place; now every thing had fallen to the dead calm of a peace establishment, or perhaps it would be nearer truth to say, risen to the state of almost open warfare, which, unhappily, too often divides those who are separated from the rest of the world; and who have little resource but in the good offices of each other. Some of the colonists, brought up on the island, were not considered as *society* by the rest; others, whose wealth formed their only claim to consideration, presumed too much upon it, and official authorities often despising

the one, and treating the other with contempt, enjoyed their lawful dignities in unbroken loneliness. Now the arrival of strangers for a time hushed these little domestic broils, which had abundance of time to run over, in all their acrimony, when there was nothing else to do; and our friends, for the little while they remained, only saw the holiday face of things.

The gentlemen repaired to the billiard-room to enjoy the favourite exercise of hot climates; and the two younger Miss Monklands, with their guitars, took Eleonora into the bower in the garden they liked the best, leaving the matrons in the quiet possession of the drawing-room.

"I never heard Mr. Sinclair talk of his uncle before," said Miss Helen Monkland to Eleonora, in the pause of her sister's song,—"where did he meet with him?"

"The meeting was, I fancy, equally unexpected upon both sides," answered Eleonora. "Dr. M'Alpin came from India with us, and had no idea of finding his nephew here."

"How charming that must have been: but do you intend to take Mr. Sinclair to England with you?"

"I fear not," answered Eleonora with her usual simplicity. "I fear he cannot go with us."

"He would think himself a lucky man," said Miss Helen, with an air of pique, "if he heard your fears on the subject, Miss Cheapstow."

"Why should he?" said Eleonora, without altering her tone, "his uncle wishes him to go, and he regrets very much himself that it is not in his power."

"We are highly flattered by his regrets, certainly," answered Miss Helen.

"It is perfectly natural, I think," said Eleonora.

"Yes, perfectly natural," answered Miss Amelia Monkland, "and perfectly natural too that Miss Cheapstow should think so."

Eleonora saw that she had, in some way displeased both the sisters, though she did

not exactly know how. She had something to learn of the vanity which could interpose its absurd pretensions against reason and duty.

Miss Amelia Monkland sang again, and at the close of her song her sister resumed the conversation: "Is the old doctor rich, since his nephew is so anxious to be with him?"

"Yes, I believe so—I think I have heard Mrs. Cheapstow say that he has a very large fortune; but what has that to do with his nephew's wishing to be with him?"

"Oh, then you think," retorted the inquirer, "that he has another reason more cogent still?"

"Certainly—I think that he is very much attached to his uncle."

"Then you believe in love at first sight?" said Miss Helen, maliciously. "I must differ with you, and confess my utter unbelief of any thing of the kind."

"I have never thought of the subject,"

answered Eleonora; "but it seems so natural to me that he should be attached to such an excellent person as the doctor."

"Now tell us truly," joined Miss Amelia, "whether it is the uncle or the nephew you think the excellent person, Miss Cheapstow?"

"Both," answered Eleonora.

"With all her simplicity you will make nothing of her," whispered Miss Amelia to Miss Helen, "she has too much self-command for you."

The conversation was continued for some time longer in the same strain—the Miss Monklands indulged themselves in saying a great many things to tease a guest, whom they seemed, beforehand, to be inclined to consider as a rival. Having speculating views themselves, they could not suppose another to be without them, and had been, to use an expression of their own, employing their telescope to look out; but Miss Helen, notwithstanding her practice in this sort of amusement, had not been able to make any

discovery, but that the uncle was rich, to which she prudently and judiciously resolved to set down Malcolm's wish to return to England, as she recollected hearing him say, two nights ago, that St. Helena was one of the most charming places he had ever been in.

There were several gentlemen of higher rank than his amongst the company at dinner, and to his modesty she again imputed his letting one of them have the honour of conducting her to table, while he attended Miss Cheapstow. "He has been accustomed to society," she thought, "and cannot be pleased with an unpractised girl like that." She sat on the same side of a crowded table, and therefore did not see that Malcolm appeared, at least, as well pleased as he had ever been in the house, and seemed to relish the conversation he listened to quite as much as he had ever done any which had flowed from more practised lips.

Colonel Cheapstow equally enjoyed the green fat of a fine turtle which General

Monkland had received as a present from a ship from the island of Ascension;—he forgot, in the variety of fish with which the table was covered, that he was on a spot where no man dared to kill his own beef without the governor's permission.

"I have not tasted any thing so delicious for a long time," said the colonel; "do, Mrs. Monkland, let me recommend a little of it to you. It is worth coming to St. Helena for such a turtle as this."

"I am happy, Colonel Cheapstow," answered the lady, "that you find any thing in our island worth coming for."

"Every thing, madam, every thing—but the world cannot match this turtle—had the cook used old London particular, which had made two voyages, it would have been absolutely incomparable."

"I can assure you, colonel, that our Madeira is seven years old, but I cannot answer that it has voyaged just as far as it ought to have done."

"That makes a most material difference, madam; I understand those things, allow me the pleasure to send you on shore a small quantity of mine, and you will see at once what I mean. You are here in the way of having such turtle, that it is absolutely a kind of treason to serve them with less than the dignity to which they are entitled."

There are some men in the world so devoted to their art, that they would willingly promote it with all their power, for the disinterested satisfaction of knowing that the thing was done as it ought to be. Now of this order was Colonel Cheapstow; and though his art was not as much esteemed by the whole of the world, as it seems in a fair way to become, if it continues to gain ground as it is daily doing, and comes to be generally received as one of the elegant accomplishments of polite society, yet he had so much the public-spirited love for it, it was an actual suffering for him to think that a fine subject, whether fowl, fish, or flesh, should

come into hands unable to do it justice, or should lose any thing of its full effect for want of the fittest materials. It was, therefore, in vain that Mrs. Monkland protested against the offered refinement. Colonel Cheapstow told her that he should blame himself as often as he recollected her delicious turtle, if he had not done all in his power towards their perfection in future: "However," he ended by saying, "your cook does deserve the Star of the Legion of Honour, for his *chef d'œuvre* even as it is."

The doctor, who had heard the last phrase across the table, took up the conversation.

"We put off setting out on our pilgrimage to the place where that misguiding star conducted its votary, Mrs. Monkland, until we should have the advantage of your advice and direction."

"If you will go by my advice Dr. M'Alpin, use your influence, and persuade the ladies to remain here to-night, and in the morning we shall muster all our cavalry for the conveyance of the party. You know there is

but *one* hack vehicle on the island, and the proprietor has so often farm-work to do for his horses, that you can never be sure of it."

The proposal was accepted with the greatest pleasure, and a messenger despatched to bring up the servants, and requisite baggage from James Town.

Finding that her guests had consented to pass the night at Plantation House, Mrs. Monkland, as soon as she left the dining-room, sent out invitations for the evening to all the villas within reach, and soon assembled a dancing party. This was an amusement, however, in which Eleonora took no part, for the simple reason that she had not learnt.

"Not dance!" said Miss Helen, running up to her when she saw that she refused every invitation; "it cannot be that you do not like dancing?"

"I really do not know how I should like it," answered Eleonora, "for I never tried."

"My dear creature where have you lived?

—have you convents in your part of the world, since you have never seen dancing?"

Mr. Sinclair saw that Eleonora's sincerity, would be no match for the inquisitive malice of her interrogator, and answered for her, "You forget the climate, Miss Helen, and you have also the cruelty to forget poor Heathcote, who is waiting—I cannot say *patiently*—for you to begin the dance. I hope this forgetfulness will not extend to the second, else I shall be the sufferer."

Miss Helen tripped away, half-consoled for the necessity of leaving Malcolm Sinclair, to talk with Eleonora during the first set. The whole thing was so perfectly new to her, that her observations could not fail to excite the curiosity of those who were unacquainted with the seclusion in which she had lived. Malcolm felt that if made to any other person they would make abundance of idle conjecture and prying inquiry, and he sat for a few moments hesitating in his mind how he should warn her against it. During this time Miss Helen Monkland looked round, and

saw with great pleasure that he was sitting in an absent and abstracted attitude.

"Will you be displeased, Miss Cheapstow," he said after a pause, "if I tell you what I was thinking of?"

"No, certainly," answered Eleonora.

"And you will not think that I am impertinent, if I presume to give you my advice and opinion?"

"I think," said Eleonora, "you were going to disapprove of what I said just now about dancing."

"I have not the presumption to disapprove—I was only going to observe—"

"Well, well," answered Eleonora interrupting him, "it does not signify about the word—I said something that I had better not have said; and to say the truth, so many questions have been asked since I came here, that I wish I knew how to stop them."

"With regard to dancing," said Malcolm, "no one has a right to know more than that you do not choose to dance, Miss Cheapstow."

"When you go away," returned Eleonora, "I will try to get beside Mrs. Cheapstow."

This was said in a tone of such confiding simplicity, as if she felt that his presence was a support to her, that Malcolm could not help for a moment being flattered by it, though the next instant he recollected that she had put him exactly upon the same footing with Mrs. Cheapstow.

"The world, and its ways, are so strange to me," she added, "that I make constant blunders when I am left to myself. I never used to be ashamed of the school in which I was brought up. Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow, and your uncle, did not regard me the less for it, and yet all this day I have felt uncomfortable about it—how is that?"

"No one, Miss Cheapstow," he replied, answering the direct question, "likes to be the object of prying curiosity, and to a person of your integrity and delicacy of mind, I can easily imagine how distressing it must be."

Eleonora coloured, and felt as if she had

made another blunder, in inducing a young man, even though Dr. M'Alpin's nephew, to pay compliments to her.

Malcolm saw what was passing in her mind, and hastened to dispel the idea. "I trust to your goodness, Miss Cheapstow, to pardon the liberty I have taken. I have been speaking to you just as if I were my uncle."

Eleonora smiled, and Malcolm felt that he had regained his lost ground.

When the dance was ended, and he left her to claim the fair hand of Miss Helen Monkland for the next set, Eleonora made her way to Mrs. Cheapstow, while Miss Helen catechised her partner.

"And who is this Miss Cheapstow," she asked; "I find she is not their daughter?"

"That I do not know," returned Malcolm, answering the letter and not the spirit of the inquiry. "Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow seem very much attached to her."

"I am dying with curiosity to know who she can be, for I have never met with a girl

of her age in my life who seems to know so little of the world she is in.—Can you tell me how, or where, she has been brought up?"

"In India, I believe, very retiredly—the *naïveté* of her manner is quite enchanting."

"You will not find many people to join in your opinion, I think," said the young lady with an air of scorn; "her manners are those of a child of four years old, who will do what she is bid, and come when she is called, and hold her tongue until she is spoken to."

"No bad thing," thought her hearer, though he gave his thoughts no tongue, but answered gallantly, "You must not expect, unless you would be called sanguine and romantic, that all the world are to possess the grace, and tact, and talents of Miss Helen Monkland."

"No, nor the adroit politeness of Mr. Sinclair," said the young lady colouring and smiling at the same moment; for though she had experience enough of the world to lay

little well-set traps for compliments, she had not yet lived long enough in it to receive them without a little colour.

Malcolm was assailed during the evening by repeated inquiries about Miss Cheapstow.

The Miss Monklands had circulated all their observations amongst their guests, and every one applied to him as the only person likely to know any thing of the matter, to whom a direct question could be addressed. His answers to other inquiries were not more satisfactory than they had been to Miss Helen, and as Eleonora staid by Mrs. Cheapstow for the rest of the evening, there was no opportunity to worm the truth from her.

The company did not remain very late; for, considering the roads they had to take before they could, most of them, reach their own homes, it was indispensable to depart before the moon set, and Eleonora fatigued with her *début* in mixed society, was very glad to retreat to her own apartment. Here,

however, the two Miss Monklands followed her, upon pretence of seeing that she had all she required for her morning's toilet.

"I observed you were talking a great deal Miss Cheapstow," said Miss Amelia Monkland, "with that old Scotch oddity, Dr. M'Alpin."

Eleonora looked surprised at hearing one whom she was accustomed to see treated with love and respect, so disrespectfully spoken of.

"I beg your pardon," Miss Amelia continued, remarking Eleonora's look, "I did not know that he was any relation of yours."

"He is no relation of mine," replied Eleonora, "but one of my best friends."

The expression again waked Miss Helen's spleen: "You are fortunate indeed to have so many friends in the same family," she said, ironically."

The jeer fell harmless, for it was unfelt, and Eleonora only answered, "I do promise

myself much pleasure in seeing the rest of the family at Fernbraes."

"Who is the family—and where is Fernbraes?" demanded Miss Amelia.

"Fernbraes, is the doctor's estate in Scotland, where I expect to meet the rest of his family, Mr. Sinclair's father and sisters."

"I understood from his captain to-night," observed Miss Helen, "that there is not the most distant probability of his ship's being ordered to England, and that they have the chance of remaining here for a long time."

This remark was made with the intention of sounding her visiter, but it was unproductive, Eleonora answered with her usual good-faith;—"Since he cannot go with his uncle, I am very happy that he is to remain here, for the first time I saw him he told me how much he was delighted with St. Helena."

"You are a strange girl, and unlike any one I have ever met with," answered Helen Monkland; "but it is high time that we

should leave you to the rest, of which you seem so much in need. Good night, and sleep quietly until I send to call you in the morning."

When the Miss Monklands, had reached their own apartment, they found Stitchwell, their maid, waiting for them with a face of pleased importance. "Only think, ladies!" she began as she took out the black pins one after another, which fastened the flowers in Miss Amelia's hair. "Only think, the strange news I have heard from Mrs. Cheapstow's ayah."

"What did you hear Stitchwell? let us have it," answered both sisters at once.

"Well if it is not one of the most wonderful things—but Miss Helen, in all my born days I never saw you look so well before! Is it not true Miss Amelia? I always told Miss Helen that that pink dress is the most becoming dress in the world, and every body allows that I know something of these things."

"Never mind the pink dress now, Stitch-

well, but tell us what you have heard—quick, there's a good body."

"Ay, that's your way, Miss Helen;—I am a good body when you want any thing from me—and a tiresome body, when I can't find things in drawers, and boxes, where it would never enter into the head of mortal to look for them—and a cross body when I can't do more than one pair of hands ever did."

"And a *dear* body, when you do what you are bid quickly," said Miss Helen, who knew from experience the value of a little well-timed flattery.

"It is all of a sudden that I have become so," anwered the waiting-woman, who was resolved to have something more than words for information which she had her own reasons for supposing would be welcome. "You thought me a very unreasonable body, when I asked that old India muslin gown, just to make a cap, which I am sure is all that it is fit for."

"Take the gown and welcome, Stitchwell,

if that will content you," answered her young mistress.

"I thank you, miss," she replied, dropping her best courtesy;—"and so you know miss, as I was telling you after dinner, when you gave me an inkling, that this miss, whom every body says is the greatest beauty that ever was seen on the island—though you may believe *I do* not think so, nor a certain person I am sure Miss Helen,—but as I was saying, when you gave me an inkling that she was not Colonel Cheapstow's daughter, I resolved to worm it all out of the ayah, poor black soul, for they see and know more than people dream of. You have no notion, ladies, what a world of curious things these creatures know."

"But what did this one know—tell us that Stitchwell?"

"I am coming to it as fast as I can."

"You will lose your thread, and our patience, if you go on at this rate Stitchwell."

"And so I says to the ayah—just as if I

knew all about it—"and when did this young lady come to your mistress? 'She come my mistress house at Madras.' Just think of the creature's way of speaking English—and says I, Did she come from England? 'No,' said she—but I cannot repeat all her gibberish and will just give her answer in plain English—she came from —where do you think ladies?"

"How should we know who have never been in the country?" said Miss Helen, impatiently. "Tell at once, do, if there is any thing to tell, and don't keep us here all night."

"Then would you believe such a fine lady came from the Orphan-school!"

"A charity-girl!" said Miss Helen.

"A charity-girl!" repeated her sister. "We are really much honoured by the society which Mrs. Cheapstow has introduced amongst us."

"But the most amusing part of the thing is," continued the informant, "that ayah tells me they are all so fond of her, that

they think nothing too good for her. Some people are born with a silver spoon in their mouth—and that they will make her their heir."

"If that is the case, there must be some relationship; I wonder what it is," said Miss Amelia.

"And she knew nothing of the ways of ladies and gentlemen when she came to Mrs. Cheapstow, and she set herself to teach her, and the old doctor set himself to teach her—and the proud colonel, nothing would serve him, but he must needs have a finger in the pie, and they have all taught her, till she thinks herself equal to, and upon a footing with her betters; and when I politely offered to help her to take off her things, ladies, before you came to your room, she said, her own servant was in waiting, forsooth! as if I wanted to wait upon her for any reason but to see and find out from herself if all ayah had told me was true, for them creatures is not to be

trusted; and I wanted to see too if the old proverb was true, that 'what comes with the wind, goes with the water,'—for the ayah told me, that she would give away her ears if they were loose."

"You may take the lace off my book-muslin—the lace you know which Mr. Sinclair tore in his awkwardness, picking up mamma's pocket-handkerchief."

"Oh! it is a sweet pretty lace and will make the most beautiful cap in the world. I may well say that any body with half an eye would know that my young ladies is gentlewomen, by their way of doing things; the heart to give is always the mark of a true lady—none of your upstart misses, too proud to exchange a word with them that's perhaps better than themselves. To please you young ladies I'll try what I can make of the doctor's man. My name is not Stitchwell, if I don't find out from him what his master had to do in this matter."

"The old man will be too hard for you,"

said Miss Amelia, willing to pique the inquiries of the inquisitor to their utmost exertion.

"If he were as hard as the rocks of St. Helena, I'll find a way to make something of him, never fear," answered Stitchwell, as she finished her services, and tucked in the musquito-curtains.

CHAPTER II.

Plût aux dieux que vous eussiez vu de quel zèle
Cette troupe entreprend une action si belle!
CORNEILLE.

OUR friends, fortunately for themselves, had arrived at St. Helena at the coolest season of the year, consequently the most favourable for the little excursion they projected; and the day promised to be so cloudy, that all the ladies joined the party with the exception of Mrs. Monkland, who said she had seen the place so often, that she would willingly resign her seat to some of the young people, provided the company would return to Plantation House to dinner: an ar-

rangement which was eagerly seconded by her daughters and soon carried into effect.

In the morning, when Mrs. Cheapstow's ayah was occupied about her mistress's toilet, she took the opportunity, fearing that she had not been quite prudent in her communications to Stitchwell, to give her own account of the matter. She had been many years in Mrs. Cheapstow's service, and therefore presumed a little upon her favour: she spoke in Hindostanee, "O mem, such a country my eyes have never seen, and such sort of people who want to know every thing."

"I forgot to give you my orders, ayah, before we left the ship, that you were not to speak one word to any body of what does not concern you, and I hope you have not done it."

"O mem, I would never do such work," answered the ayah, with an air of the most respectful confidence. "What am I, that I should think in my heart, much less speak

with my mouth of what it is my mistress pleasure that no one should look on."

"Take care that you do not tell me a falsehood, and then questions will not signify," answered her mistress.

"Mem speaks the words of truth—but Cussim Ali, the doctor sahib's servant, who knows if he will be so wise?"

"Cussim Ali is not a child to talk like women," returned Mrs. Cheapstow, "there is no fear of him."

The mortified favourite felt every praise bestowed upon another as taken from herself, and answered with an air as if she knew more than she intended to tell, "Cussim Ali is an old fool, whose long beard is good for nothing but to make mischief, and if he has not told Miss Elora's tale all will be well."

"Tie your own tongue," said her mistress, "and do not trouble yourself about him."

Mrs. Stitchwell had, in conformity with her last night's intention, stopped for a mo-

ment before her young ladies' bell rung, with Cussim Ali, who was brushing his master's boots, just to ask him if he would not have one of the house-servants to do that for him?

"No," answered Cussim, "there is nobody here who can please my master, but myself."

"In cleaning boots, you mean," said the waiting-woman, laughing, "there is some whose company he likes better, or I'm mistaken."

The old Mussulman never laughed, and he hated it as an expression of feeling deserving his utmost contempt, he drew back his head, swelled his nostrils, and answered without deigning to look on a person so little in his opinion.

"What is that to you?"

"Nothing in the world," replied the persevering inquirer, who was not to be foiled at the first attack; "but when you were talking of pleasing your master, I thought it would be more likely that he should be

pleased with such a beautiful young lady as Miss Cheapstow."

"My master knows as well as I do," answered Cussim Ali, scornfully, while he studiously kept his eyes from looking at the person to whom he was speaking, "that women were made but for servants and slaves, and that they are below the notice of wise men."

"Your master knows no such thing, that is the creed of your country, not his."

"Yes," said the Mussulman, who left off brushing his boot, to curl his mustaches in his wrath, as he found that he had a good opportunity for discharging some of the vexation he was forced to submit to, when in obedience to his master's orders he was obliged to help the ladies first. "And if their tongues were cut, and their feet tied, there would be less mischief in the world—is it fit that creatures like you, who have no more sense than the young of a peacock, should go out and come in at your own

pleasure and laugh too, like the chattering apes?"

He grinned in scorn at the very idea.

"But for all your wisdom, and all your dignity, and all your gravity," exclaimed the exasperated waiting-maid, "you, Mr. Cussim Ali, you must wait upon European ladies *respectfully* as becomes you, or get your ears well pulled by your master, as you deserve at this minute, for charging all your outlandish ideas upon an English gentleman!"

The Miss Monkland's bell rung, and Stitchwell, fairly defeated in her purpose, was obliged to attend its call, while the offended Mussulman stroked down his beard, first with one hand, and then with the other, as if he would smooth out the affronts he had received.

At this instant the ayah made her appearance, and commenced her attack by saying,

"I see very well, Cussim Ali, that you have been doing what you have no business

to do, and telling the English ayah what she has no business to know."

"It is a lie, as large as yourself!" said the Mussulman.

"Then it is you that made it," replied the dauntless ayah.

"Who are you, that dare give an answer before me?" retorted Cussim, "take your unlucky face out of my sight, which has been twice offended by the folly of women this morning—surely it is an omen of evil, and foretels misfortune—*begone*, I say!"

"Yes, you may speak of misfortune, Cussim Ali, when you have disobeyed your master, and gone against my mistresses' pleasure, and forgot the colonel sahib's orders. You will find the wages of your work."

"You are too little for me to exchange words with, and lower than the dust below my feet," retorted the Mussulman, walking off with measured gravity, muttering between his shut teeth as he went, on the folly and

perversity of women in general, and the whole race of ayahs in particular.

The antagonist rested quite satisfied, that if any thing of her imprudent communications came up, she could turn it all over upon Cussim Ali, whom she hated for the reputation of fidelity he enjoyed, as she considered to her detriment; and she wisely calculated that if her loquacity brought punishment, it would be much better that it should fall upon him than upon herself.

In the mean time Stitchwell hurried into her young ladies' apartment, her colour very much improved by the piquancy of the dialogue that had just passed.

"What a complexion you have Stitchwell, and how your hand shakes!" observed Miss Amelia.

"And no wonder! I never was so provoked in my life;" and she ran glibly through the whole detail, acting Cussim Ali's acts of scorn, to the infinite amusement of her young mistresses.

When they had stopped laughing, Miss

Amelia advised her to say nothing about the matter, "for mamma will be very little pleased to hear that you have been quarrelling with servants of the visiters, whatever may be the provocation."

"It is very hard that a person is obliged to put up with the insolence of a black creature like that—but you will be late, Miss Helen, there's Mrs. Cheapstow, up and dressed before I came here, and gone straight to miss's chamber—she makes as much fuss about her as if she was her own child, a hundred times; I wonder what it can mean—and there's Mr. Sinclair, singing in the garden like a sky-lark; I wish he could hear that old rogue's proposal to cut our tongues and tie our feet—a pretty way to speak indeed!—as if it had been one of his own poor slavish ignorant countrywomen."

"Never mind, Stitchwell," said Miss Helen, "you have the advantage of him, he will be a cleverer man than Cussim Ali, that will tie your tongue, or restrict it either."

"Considering how things stand," said Miss Amelia to her sister on their way to the breakfast-room," it will be impossible for us to show how little we value the new society which Mrs. Cheapstow has brought to us."

"New, indeed," answered her sister, "I wonder, if General Monkland knew all, what he would think of such company for his daughters! Though, to be sure, if they mean to adopt her, they have a right to take her with them wherever they go—which makes it more provoking. I wonder if Mr. Sinclair, with all his ideas of birth and propriety, knows this."

"He is a Scotchman," answered Miss Amelia; "and though he is proud, he is poor and politic—he is not the eldest son you know, not his uncle's heir, and it would be no bad speculation to be Colonel Cheapstow's —perhaps the M'Alpin blood might buy the Indian fortune."

Her sister let go her arm, and answered coldly, "I am certain he has more sense of his own merits than to throw them away so basely."

"Men, in our day, never think their merits ill laid out in the purchase of a nabob's fortune, Helen; perhaps, before they came to the island, your ten thousand pounds seemed full value for all."

"He dared not think any thing of the kind!" said Miss Helen; but recollecting herself for a moment, she added, "this supposition about the Cheapstows, is all your own,"—and she entered the breakfast-room with the intention of making further observations before she took any definite step.

When did a coquette ever make an observation but through the medium of her own vanity, or see the things most obvious to all other eyes, but as she desired that they should be; and to use again the worn out simile of the moth round the candle, the inability to flutter longer, is almost invariably the only efficacious restraining preventative.

Malcolm Sinclair was a guest in her father's house, and, in a manner, an officer under his command; so that it was hardly possible that General Monkland's daughters

should not meet with attention, particularly when their own merits, and all the circumstances of the case, were thrown into the scale. They were lively, and in the common acceptation of the word, agreeable girls; they knew, and constantly practised all the little aids and helps of conversation and society, which, to those who had no other means of getting over their time, was invaluable in a place like St. Helena; and it was quite natural that those who were tired of the confinement of a vessel, or a garrison, should accept, with pleasure, an invitation to Plantation House, and feel and express themselves thankful for permission to go there without even that ceremony.

Of this number was Malcolm Sinclair—his natural gaiety of heart, prepossessing appearance, gentlemanly manners, and the unaffected ease of his domestic habits, soon made him a general favourite with all the members of the governor's family. Mrs. Monkland permitted him to come at all times, and he walked into the drawing-room, or into

the garden, without being announced; the servants had the habit of saying, "It is not a stranger, only Mr. Sinclair," and the family had the habit of expecting him.

It is but justice, however, to him to say, that though he had great pleasure in the society of those who treated him so kindly in a place where he had so few resources, he had never thought of paying particular attention to any of the sisters. He borrowed books for them, and got music copied from the naval and military bands, and danced and made sketches amongst the rocks, without any other intention than making the term of his exile agreeable to himself, and those amongst whom it was past.

Such a domestication of a stranger was perhaps not prudent upon the part of Mrs. Monkland; but her husband had always held high military commands in foreign settlements, and was consequently in a manner obliged to receive strangers and officers under his command, to a greater or less degree of intimacy, in his family; and she trusted that

her daughters had been too well trained, and knew too well their own advantages to think of those whose situation or interest did not give them a title to have aspiring notions.

Miss Helen had not bestowed very particular attention upon Malcolm, except as a means of mortifying her servant Mr. Heathcote, until Eleonora's appearance amongst them; her remarkable beauty made her an object worth disputing with, and from the moment she had heard Eleonora's name mentioned with praise, Malcolm Sinclair suddenly rose in her eyes.

CHAPTER III.

Narrow in thy dwelling now! Dark the place of thine abode!
With three steps I compass thy grave, O thou who wast so great before!

OSSIAN.

AFTER breakfast, the governor's carriages were in waiting for the party, and in consideration of their being old Indians and unable to stand the sun, Colonel Cheapstow was taken into one, and Dr. M'Alpin into the other. Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow, Miss Monkland and her friend led the way; the three young ladies following under the care of the doctor attended by half a dozen equestrians.

Their first point was Longwood, where they arrived without accident, notwithstanding the precipitous road they had climbed, and the animals upon which some of the party were mounted. The house, which was at the time uninhabited, had a desolate and dreary appearance, standing on the steep slope of a hill overlooking the sea, unsheltered, in the bright blaze of a vertical sun, which just then broke from the clouds, which had covered it all the morning.

The empty apartments were soon inspected, and they passed on to the little summer-house in the corner of the garden, where he who had experienced the greatest varieties of human life was wont to sit for hours, poring upon a small rivulet of clear water, which ran always the same. A worn opening was pointed out, where he had been in the habit of resting the telescope with which he looked out on the rolling ocean.

Who, in seeing these silent memorials of the manner in which a captive whiled away the hours of hopeless retrospection, at the

moment, can remember the crimes of overgrown ambition—the absolute indifference to human suffering and human life, which had cast him like a rootless weed on a desert shore?

"We are perverse creatures, colonel," said Dr. M'Alpin, "poor contradictory perverse creatures. I mind as if it were yesterday, the pleasure I had in hearing at Lucknow, that the disturber of the world was quietly landed here, never again to flood continental Europe with human blood, and I no sooner find myself set in the place in which he sat, and gazing on the little burn on which he gazed, than I am disposed to forget all but his fame—his renown—the splendid monuments he has left; and when I see the spot which his telescope wore by long use—what he suffered—could this little spot give us a record of the bitter thoughts which must have filled his heart here, what a sermon would it be on ambition!"

"Yes, yes, doctor! when a man has started with the misguiding star before his

eyes, and his good sword in his right hand, the chance is, he follows the phantom from 'weal to woe.'"

"We should all turn philosophers," joined Mrs. Cheapstow, "if we were to stay here; there is a spirit in the place which gives tongues to stones and running brooks, and to exemplify it I will give you my opinion, that he would never have come here if it had not been for his moral delinquency. He turned away his wife which was the beginning of evil to him. For the sake of securing a throne to his son, he projected the Russian campaign, and all followed in course. Had that marriage never taken place, had that son never been born, *he*, if short-sighted mortals may presume to say what *might have been*, would perhaps never have been here."

"At all events," said the doctor, "this island is his kingdom, there is nothing but his name in the whole place."

"That is true," said the colonel, who had pleasure sometimes in bringing down what

he considered his friend's flights. "And a bare, desolate, unproductive domain it is!"

The young people had, under the favour of a cloud, which came over the sun, been examining the little garden, which had not much to attract their attention, and Helen Monkland had in vain essayed to have a moment's conversation with Malcolm Sinclair. The party was too large, and the place too small to admit of her speaking without more hearers than she wanted, so that she was obliged to reserve a communication she was dying to make until some more fitting opportunity.

Our friends were again in motion, and as the day continued cloudy, the ladies were able to quit their carriages, when they reached the little valley which Napoleon had fixed on as the place where he should wish to rest. Three weeping willows bend their pendant branches over the spot, which is covered with five flat stones, taken from the kitchen floor at Longwood, and guarded from intrusion by an iron railing. A scanty

stream of water runs through the little valley, and gives it a more verdant appearance than is found in some other parts of the island.*

"When I stand here," said Dr. M'Alpin, plucking one of the violets which had been planted by Madame Bertrand, at the head of the grave, "I will forget that he was an enemy of my country, and only think of the conquering general, whose eagles flew to victory at his command."

"It has sometimes seemed strange to me, doctor," said Colonel Cheapstow, "that with your spirit you should have chosen to heal wounds, instead of to make them."

"Ay, colonel, the human heart is like the deep sea, a strong current runs on the surface which is visible to all eyes, but there is often a stronger far below, which runs in a contrary direction, and may account to you for things being found in places where they could not have been looked for. No one is

* This was written before the removal of Napoleon's remains.

more sensible of the bright side of honour and fame and victory than I am; but I know well when these dazzling meteors lead on the nations, what is left on the road which has been passed, and I choose to follow them with my feeble help."

"May every one, my dear uncle, who treads the bright path, be sure of such followers," answered Malcolm;" but give me to lead—to lead always, though it should land me here."

"I would follow, and not lead," said Eleonora.

"And I would lead, and not follow," answered Helen Monkland, who doubtless expected that Malcolm would be pleased with an opinion so like his own—but no applause followed.

"Here we are again under the spell of this man's influence," said Mrs. Cheapstow, "making our confessions, and looking into our own hearts, by the grave of *him* who considered the human race as but born to aggrandize him; and who knew, and sought

to know, nothing of the human heart, but to make its weakness his strength."

"While we are here," said Eleonora, "let us not remember what he has done, but what he has suffered."

"Sweet Eleonora," said the doctor, "that is a sentiment worthy of yourself;" and Malcolm's speaking countenance showed that he quite agreed with his uncle's opinion.

"And so my amiable visionary," said Mrs. Cheapstow, laughing, "my stern realities, are to be put out of countenance by your *beau idéal* of the matter. Well, well, let it be so; there was a time when I could dream dreams, and see visions, as well as another, though you know, doctor, *that* time does not with all the world last for ever."

"And when it is passed," answered the doctor, "what better comes in place of it? A naked show of mean realities, clipped to the smallest dimensions, and poorest forms, by the unsparing hand of reason. The rolling blast of the desert sweeps up the sand into a pyramid, which, however high it may

be reared, is as easily scattered as it was brought together; and it is often hard for us to believe, that where we have the power to attract, we have not the same power to hold."

Helen Monkland heard nothing but the last sentence as she was following Malcolm to get a sprig of the willow which she had bribed a sentry (placed to prevent the trees from being carried away as relics) to permit her to cut. She, as every body does, applied the remark she heard to what was passing in her own mind.

"I shall soon see," she thought, "if this observation be true."

"Thank you, Mr. Sinclair," she said, taking the willow from his hand; "this will do, it is quite sufficient for my album of plants from celebrated spots. Why do you cut so much?"

"The other ladies," answered Malcolm, "will perhaps like to have a memorial also."

"Oh, no, I assure you my sisters do not care for such things; and Miss Cheapstow,

it is not to be supposed, from her education, poor thing, that she can feel interest in any thing of the kind."

Malcolm looked surprised, and the speaker proceeded.

"I really pity her, Mr. Sinclair. It must be very distressing for her to be brought into company so much above her."

"Miss Cheapstow can never dread, or feel such a mortification," answered Malcolm, with a voice which would have prevented any other person from going further, but she eagerly broke in,—

"Oh! I can assure you you have been misinformed. She is only a charity-girl, taken from a charity-school at Madras by Mrs. Cheapstow, and has no more right to the name of Cheapstow than I have."

Malcolm was so surprised and provoked, that Miss Helen was disposed to flatter herself, from his momentary silence and rising colour, that she had gained her point.

"Poor thing! that accounts for her not learning to dance, and for her being igno-

rant of every thing that young ladies ought to know. I really quite feel for her."

"There is not the least occasion, Miss Monkland," said Malcolm; "and you will doubtless be happy to hear that Miss Cheapstow, though perhaps she has no legal claim to that name, is a gentlewoman by birth, as well as by manners."

"I am extremely happy indeed to hear it," answered the young lady, with an air of incredulous scorn; "and more particularly as no one could expect to meet with birth or breeding at a charity-school. But, Mr. Sinclair, since you know so much, you will perhaps be able to tell me how she came there?"

"By the death of her parents. And you may rest assured that the circumstance is authentic, when I tell you that my uncle is my authority."

Miss Helen felt herself overwhelmed with a variety of feelings, which, taken either individually or collectively, were altogether contrary to her expectations and wishes

Mr. Sinclair knew, and disregarded the circumstances which she hoped would weigh so much in her favour; in fact, they only created more interest in his eyes, and she had shown herself envious and spiteful to no purpose.

His perfect command of temper did not deceive her, when he said, "she would be happy to hear that Eleonora was a gentlewoman," and at that moment she would have been pleased if something which she could have construed into disrespect on his part, had permitted her to tell him her mind more freely; but Malcolm, though for a moment exceedingly vexed and provoked with what the generosity of his mind felt to be a mean and cruel subject of triumph, and one upon which he might have spoken differently to any *man* who had made the same observations, never forgot the respect due even to the folly of his informant. He felt also a sort of mortification, that a person of whom he had thought so well could behave so ill, and said

in his own mind, "Is this the lively, agreeable, playful Miss Helen Monkland?"

An awkward kind of silence subsisted for a few moments, while both parties were revolving their own thoughts. Miss Helen, was the first to observe, "but though you have told me where you got your information, you have not asked where I got mine."

"No," he answered, "I am quite satisfied that you are convinced of its inaccuracy."

There was something in this speech, commonplace as it was, which rather soothed the irritated state of the young lady's feelings, and disposed her to conciliate, finding there was nothing else left for her.

"I think it will be as well not to say any thing of the matter, since the thing turns out so differently."

"I quite agree with you, Miss Helen," answered Malcolm.

The look of approbation which accompanied his assent, in a manner indemnified Helen, for the interest he had shown in the

matter, and which vanity again began to whisper, arose more from the idea that she should think or she should act unworthy of herself than any interest in another. Malcolm had no intention to deceive, and though not perfectly indifferent to the good or ill opinion of handsome young ladies, was not at this moment conscious that he had a greater share of it than he deserved.

CHAPTER IV.

If knowledge of the world makes men perfidious,
May Juba ever live in ignorance!

ADDISON.

IT was late before the party reached Plantation House, and the ladies found themselves so fatigued with the labours of the morning that they separated to take a little rest before dressing for dinner. Mrs. Cheapstow took that opportunity of spending half an hour with Eleonora, who recounted to her all the little blunders she had fallen into, and the host of questions she had drawn upon herself, and the odd way in which the Miss Monklands had behaved to her during the excursion.

"They asked what relation subsisted between me and Colonel Cheapstow—if Dr. M'Alpin was a relation of mine—when I had first seen you—who were my companions, and what I had learnt."

"It is my fault," answered Mrs. Cheapstow; "I might have foreseen, my dear, that an envious and prying world would take advantage of your inexperience."

"What can any one envy in me?" said Eleonora, "unless, indeed, it is the happiness of having you, and Colonel Cheapstow, and Dr. M'Alpin, and Mr. Sinclair for my friends. All the girls envied my happiness when I left school with you; but it is different with the Miss Monklands who have their own mamma, and know so many things that I am ignorant of."

"Yes, they certainly know some things that you are fortunately ignorant of, and I ought to have put you on your guard before we came here. However, I do not regret what has passed; you have gained some experience, which as it has been painful will be

of more use than all I could have said ; and as all this has passed amongst strangers with whom we part in a few days, it is of no consequence."

"I never imagined that any one could think the loss of my parents, and my being brought up at an orphan-school, at all droll; but the Miss Monklands did."

"How did they come by that intelligence? did you tell them?"

"No ; they seemed to know every thing, and asked a hundred questions, which I could not refuse to answer without falsehood."

"We are in a perverse world, Eleonora, where malignant curiosity is always at work; and in future, my love, when you meet with things new to you, you will restrain the remarks which give it birth."

"I will never make observations to any one but Mr. Sinclair, who is good enough to help my ignorance without laughing at it."

Mrs. Cheapstow looked at Eleonora as she spoke, and saw from the expression of her countenance, that it was needless to say any

thing upon this subject, and as they were to leave Sinclair at St. Helena in a few days, no inconvenience, she thought, could result from this friendship.

Eleonora was in want, as she said of some one to instruct her ignorance in the thousand trifles on which no lesson in advance could avail, and Mr. Sinclair was candid enough to see her character as it really was, and honourable enough not to take advantage of it.

Malcolm Sinclair was Dr. M'Alpin's nephew, a distinction in the eyes of Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow, which placed him in their family on a very different footing to that which the length of their acquaintance warranted, and Mrs. Cheapstow contented herself with merely saying in answer to Eleonora, "Whenever you can ask my advice, my dear, it will be best to come at once to me. You know that no one is so much interested in all that concerns you."

"Dear Mrs. Cheapstow, you have been more than a mother to me, and your advice

and opinion is better to me than the whole earth. What was I until I saw you? you have given me a mind that I should never have had but for you, and happiness that I did not know was in the world."

"My poor girl, my dear girl!" said Mrs. Cheapstow, kissing her forehead, "long may it be so. Now dress, and send the ayah to me when you have done."

Mrs. Cheapstow left the room, and her grateful protégée commenced her toilet utterly unconscious that she possessed in no common degree the loveliness of appearance which would make her an object of envy to thousands. The extraordinary circumstances of her life had precluded the possibility of her meeting with the attentions or compliments which usually from the cradle inform the possessors of personal endowment, of the advantages they enjoy. The object of a kind of jealousy from her youth upwards, the praise or caresses bestowed on beautiful children in general, had never been hers. As she grew up, her disinclination

to take part in the amusements of her school-mates, and her love of reading when she could find a book, still kept her at a greater distance. At school she knew she was different from those by whom she was surrounded, but she fancied that difference consisted in her European parentage, and she had actually attained the age of seventeen, without knowing that she possessed loveliness of form and feature which falls but to the lot of few.

Helen Monkland on reaching her room, threw herself upon a couch, and took up a book with the intention of preventing her sister from asking questions, which she was not at that moment disposed to answer. Out of humour with herself, with Malcolm, and Eleonora, she hardly knew upon what to fix, and she began to revolve in her own mind all that had passed in the morning.

"To have such a girl as that preferred to me, is too provoking—and by Sinclair too, who until now I thought a man of such taste and spirit—one who could appreciate

accomplishments and elegance of manners—what can he see in that girl? Stupid as he is, I cannot think he is so mean as to be swayed by her expectations—for they may be but expectations after all—a thousand things may occur to disappoint them—the old colonel, before he has time to make a will may perhaps die of a surfeit, or if his wife goes first, he may take another and then where are her expectations? The sight of that girl with her affected modesty and simplicity and indifference is hateful to me! It may impose upon the old doctor, who I fancy has never seen half a dozen young ladies in his life, and that accounts for it—it is he who has described her to his nephew as a heroine of romance. As soon as I see him I shall try to find out how things stand in that quarter."

She continued to consider the subject so long that her sister had finished dressing before she began. The only satisfactory point she could fix upon, was that the Indiaman was to sail in a few days, and

Sinclair was to remain. "If it were only possible to make him see what the world thinks of such people, without my appearing in the matter—for I would not flatter his vanity by letting him think that I am jealous, nor shock his romance by appearing envious—I have it! Fanny Jerrel dines here—she is the very person I want."

Charmed with this arrangement the young lady sprung up, and set to business industriously, that she might be ready to commence operations. Fortunately as she was going down stairs she heard Miss Jerrel's voice in the hall, and taking her for a few moments into the library, on pretence of communicating to her dear friend all that had occurred since their last meeting, she gave her the whole history of Eleonora, and did not forget to add a paragraph regarding the absurdity of the attention which was paid to such a person.

"Astonishing!" answered Miss Fanny, when she had listened to all. "Every one

whom I have seen for the last two days, has done nothing but talk of this Miss Cheapstow, and her grace and her elegance—I really cannot understand it—but what does Mr. Heathcote, and what does Mr. Sinclair say?"

"Heathcote, I fancy has never troubled himself with the matter, and Sinclair only sees through his old uncle's spectacles."

"Is it possible that a man of such taste and such refinement—such a judge of dignity and propriety—(you recollect how much he wished to prejudice you against me for a harmless joke) should be captivated by a little ignorant girl, who I dare say does not know that there are such things in the world?"

"I did not say he was *captivated*," said Helen, laying an accent on the word which betrayed her vexation. "I only said that he was disposed to consider her misfortunes, as his uncle has taught him to call them, very interesting. If he really thought she was a soldier's child he would see the story in a

different light. He is too much of a Scotchman to dispense with birth, though he overlooks breeding."

"I owe him a little reprisal for his opinion of me, and if you will help me, Helen, this night shall not pass before I have paid my debt."

"Whatever you do Fanny, you know I must not appear in it, for she is a guest in this house, and mamma would be very angry if I were to go beyond the rules of politeness."

"Never fear—the rules of politeness are so elastic that we may extend them a little for our own purposes, without giving any one cause of complaint."

"All that is very well, Fanny, but mamma has an eye upon me constantly, and if you will amuse yourself I must absolutely not appear in it."

"I understand all that, Helen, and I mean to give you the amiable character of the defender—you know, my dear, you will gain in every body's eyes by that."

"Oh! you naughty girl!" answered Helen, laughing and colouring at the same moment. "You have so much invention."

Miss Fanny Jerrel, and Miss Helen Monkland entered the drawing-room together;—the former was presented by the latter to the innocent object of her intended persecution, and Helen saw by her friend's retreating and disdainful courtesy, that she was surprised by the sight of beauty, much beyond what she had expected.

Mortified by this discovery, because conscious that the graces obvious to a prejudiced person must be real, Helen whispered in the ear of her friend, "You see she is too strong for you—better give over the attempt."

"On the contrary, her calm indifference is only an additional motive. Did you remark how she received my dignified bend, which I intended should overwhelm her?—and the cool insolence of Sinclair's bow, and his hope, "that he had the honour to see Miss Jerrel well?" I think he has a fore-

taste of what we wish for him. His tone had all the studied gravity and solemnity of a Chinese mandarin, repeating by heart a lesson out of the book of ceremonies, and his body bent in the angle to express, "I have the honour to detest you!"

"Now you are seeking to justify yourself Fanny, for the intentions you are resolved to carry into execution."

"Not at all—and since you disapprove of them Helen, we will think no more on the subject."

"I should certainly disapprove of your doing a malicous thing, Fanny; but for a little innocent amusement—and you have already told me that is all you mean, why should you give it up?"

"Come, come, Helen—be frank, and if you give me the trouble to humble interlopers and truant swains, give me the credit also. Say the truth—you will be very well pleased if I displace the idol, and show it to be but potter's clay instead of porcelain,

so that you do not lose in the eyes of the worshippers ?"

"You are a clever girl, Fanny, that I have always told you."

"But at present it would be more to the purpose to tell me that I have hit the right mark—for mind ye, I will not be brought to try my skill blindfold."

"I did not know you were so vain, Fanny, else I would have told you that you are right—quite right in all you say and do."

"Now then, Helen, we know the matter in hand, and the why and the wherefore."

At dinner Miss Jerrel managed to seat herself by Dr. M'Alpin, who had handed the eldest Miss Monkland to table, and contrived to make the conversation more amusing to him, than the dulness of his right-hand companion would have promised.

Miss Jerrel had lately arrived from England, where she had been sent at an age when the dispositions of the mind were not

to be changed, nor her early habits of falsehood, envy, and gossip regulated with the same facility as the ringlets of her hair. She returned, however, at the end of three years, "quite a new person," as her parents said. Perfectly accomplished — perfectly well dressed—perfectly versed in the rules of society, and perfectly ready to make as much mischief amongst her acquaintance as little Fanny Jerrel had ever done,—to whose authority every piece of unfounded intelligence had been traced from the time she had attained her eighth year.

After she had talked on different subjects long enough with Dr. M'Alpin to secure his attention, she commenced her efforts by asking, "How long has that young lady been with Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow?"

"For some months," answered the doctor, turning to address some observation to Miss Monkland.

"And where has she been brought up?" continued Miss Jerrel.

"In India," was the laconic reply.

Miss Jerrel, not easily baffled returned again to the charge. "And I have heard that she has lost her parents at a very early age."

"Yes," answered the doctor; "but perhaps you have not heard that she has found in their place friends who love and respect her, and who will take care that as far as depends upon them, no inconvenience to her may occur from such a misfortune."

This was said in a dry, determined tone of voice calculated to repress further inquiry; it was, however, lost upon the insensibility of the hearer, who, pretending to be ignorant of the relationship which subsisted between Dr. M'Alpin and Mr. Sinclair, answered with the utmost composure, "In such circumstances she is fortunate indeed—however judging from appearances," and she cast a glance across the table where Eleonora and Malcolm were seated. "Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow will soon be relieved from the responsibility of their charitable work; young man seems much disposed to tak

their hands. Perhaps, indeed, he may suppose, that since they have given her their name, they will give her something more substantial."

"That young man is my nephew, and not disposed to do or say any thing contrary to honour or honesty, which is more than can be said of all the world," answered the doctor.

"Your nephew, Dr. M'Alpin! Oh, I beg your pardon! I trust you will never imagine that I had the most distant idea of such a thing."

"Imaginations to trouble my own peace or that of others, Miss Jerrel, do not disturb me—and as there is no harm done, no mischief can come of it," said the doctor, turning again to address his right-hand neighbour.

"Oh, Mr. Sinclair!" said Miss Jerrel, with her usual effrontery, "help me to make my peace with your uncle! "Help me out of this scrape!"

"I know no one so able to help herself out of any difficulty, as Miss Jerrel," said Sinclair, bowing coldly.

"But you, who are so fond of *charity*, will not surely satisfy your conscience with the pretty compliment you have just made me and refuse your assistance?"

At the word *charity*, upon which Miss Jerrel chose to place a very peculiar emphasis, a little titter was heard amongst some of the young people; but Malcolm Sinclair, though he well discerned both the intention and application of the phrase, was above the petty malice, and he answered with the same cool reserve as before.

"My assistance, Miss Jerrel, is always at the service of any one who stands in need of it—your superior abilities would only be obscured by my clumsy efforts."

Dr. M'Alpin felt too thorough a contempt for the malice of Miss Jerrel's design to take the least part in any thing regarding her, and continued all the time the ladies re-

mained at table to talk with Miss Monkland, whose good-natured indifference rarely saw much of what was going on about her.

Eleonora had regarded all the speakers in turn, and easily perceived that something had discomposed the doctor, without having the most distant idea that she was in any way connected with it. An aide-de-camp, who had handed Miss Jerrel to table, seeing that something had gone wrong with the young lady, which might, perhaps, mar the harmony of the evening, did what he knew would be most agreeable to Mrs. Monkland, and endeavoured to regain her attention by well-timed compliments.

"Something has vexed your uncle, Mr. Sinclair," said Eleonora, after a moment's silence.

A suspicion of the truth crossed Malcolm's mind, or at least something like it, and troubled the usual gaiety of his manners, though he only answered, "That young

lady is not more agreeable to him, I suppose, than she is to me."

"I wish we were away from this place," said Eleonora; "I do not know what there is that vexes us all by turns, and vexation is so new to me now, that I do not take it so humbly as I used to do."

"Nothing short of fiend-like malice could seek to vex you."

"I do not know that any one seeks to do it," replied Eleonora; "and yet sometimes I think they do; and it grieves me to see my friends suffer. There is your uncle and yourself, at this moment, both vexed to the heart.—We should be much better on board ship again."

"But you forget, Miss Cheapstow, that I am not to go with you," said Malcolm, "and that your departure will be my grief."

"And is that fixed?" inquired Eleonora, sorrowfully.

"Yes—quite, our ship must remain; but I

trust we shall soon be relieved, and then I shall be at liberty."

"And then," said Eleonora, "we shall all be happy at Fernbraes, without any of these people to torment us!"

CHAPTER V.

Paget. Malice cannot spy a fault in her, mischief cannot make one; and, if I might offer my advice, it should be, to desist from any further plans in the attempt: 'tis merely loss of labour, take my word for it.

Lord D. To say the truth, I begin to be of your opinion; but till a better plan can be struck out, we must persist in this: you know my reasons.

CUMBERLAND'S *Mysterious Husband.*

THE ladies rose from table, and in going to the drawing-room Miss Jerrel laid hold of Eleonora's arm, as familiarly as if they had been old acquaintance, and dragging her towards the piano, said,

"Now, my dear creature, I must hear you play."

"I do not play a note, I never played in my life," answered Eleonora.

"How extraordinary! then sing, and I will play the accompaniment for you."

"I cannot sing in company—I never sing before strangers."

"That is to say that I am company, for certainly you do not consider the Miss Monkland's strangers."

"I never have sung but with friends," replied Eleonora.

"I beg you would not consider us enemies—so begin."

"I beg you will excuse me," said Eleonora, taking the opportunity of release which Miss Jerrel's seating herself at the piano afforded, and she walked to the other end of the room, where Miss Amelia and Miss Helen were turning over a portfolio.

Miss Jerrel no sooner missed Eleonora, than the sudden inclination for music

fright, and she followed her to finish catechising.

"You draw, Miss Cheapstow, I am sure?" she said.

"I wish I could, for I should like it very much."

"Then why do you not?" asked Miss Jerrel.

"Because I never learnt."

"Then you are a linguist, I suppose?"

"No; unfortunately. I know little of any language but my native tongue."

"Then you must be a great worker? quite a proficient in fancy-work, I presume."

"You will think me very ignorant, if I confess that I hardly know what you call fancy-work," answered Eleonora.

The interrogator laughed triumphantly, and continued,

"My dear creature, where can you have lived, to have been brought up in such a state of nature? Your time must have passed in the garden of Eden, since you have

never been harassed with the troubles of accomplishments which fall to the lot of all other women. You have neither been tormented with dancing, playing, singing, drawing, working, or languages; I dare say you have also been exempted from reading and writing. Oh, what an enviable life yours has been! and how free from the toils that we have been forced to undergo!"

"Unfortunately, I have been deprived of many of the advantages which others enjoy, but not exactly to the degree you imagine," answered Eleonora, who now became aware of Miss Jerrel's malicious intentions.

"*Deprived*," said Miss Jerrel, seizing upon the word, "then your story must be very interesting; pray do tell it to us, there is nothing I dote upon so much as a romantic story."

"I am sorry I cannot gratify your taste," replied Eleonora. "The loss of both my parents in infancy is a circumstance which can only be interesting to noble minds."

"Why is not Mr. Sinclair here to hear you?" answered Miss Jerrel, "he would have more reason to be flattered with the observation than I have."

"Yes; it would apply to him," said Eleonora with some emotion.

Helen Monkland had been a silent hearer of this dialogue, while she continued to turn over the prints, and she had the good sense clearly to perceive that Eleonora's undeviating rectitude of character would give her an advantage in the eyes of Mr. Sinclair which it would not be easy to counterbalance.

"If she were ashamed of her situation it would be possible to humble her, but she is above pretences." Helen bit her lips when the thought rose in her mind; "but if any one can bring her down, it will be Fanny Jerrel."

Eleonora, vexed with what had passed, and dissatisfied with herself, retired to one of the windows which opened into the garden, and drawing her chair as near the

steps as she could, set herself to consider what she had done and said.

"I have suffered myself to behave in a very petulant manner, I fear," she thought; "I am so spoiled by kindness that I seem to consider it as a right, and I forgot that the very want of all those things of which Miss Jerrel spoke, leaves me far behind those who have had such advantages; and every one must think so, though they have more good-nature than to make me sensible of it, as this young lady has done."

The thought was so mortifying, that Eleonora continued to meditate upon it until Dr. M'Alpin, who had come into the room without her observing him, asked her "what she was thinking about, and what made her so melancholy?"

"You will think me so vain if I tell you," answered Eleonora.

He recollected Miss Jerrel's observation, and for a moment thought Eleonora's present abstraction connected with it,

answered with his usual kindness, "You know, Eleonora, I have never thought you vain, and why should I do so now?"

"Because, until this evening, I never knew how ignorant and unlike the other girls I am."

He looked at her while she was speaking, and saw that something had happened to overturn the usual tranquillity of her mind. "Before I can speak on the subject, you must tell me, Eleonora, what has led to this discovery," he said.

"Miss Jerrel," answered Eleonora, "has been telling me all the things that I know nothing about, and I was foolish enough to be angry with her."

"If she has been exercising her adder's tongue on you, my poor child," said Dr. M'Alpin, "I do not wonder that you were vexed; but do not forget that though you know nothing of the trifles which she calls accomplishments, you are not ignorant of truth, and honour, and maiden[illegible] modesty like her, and the possession

the three, would do her more good than all the odds and ends of vain education which have turned her silly head; and never forget, Eleonora, that you have friends who value you for your own good qualities, for the dispositions of your heart, and not for the world's wealth or frothy acquirements."

"I hope you will not think I am ungrateful," replied Eleonora. "Surely, blest as I am, I have more reason to be contented and happy than any other person in the world! though I cannot help wishing that I were more worthy of such kindness."

"Make yourself easy on that head," said the doctor, "and never think that you would better yourself by resembling the senseless, useless, vain creatures, who envy what they can never attain."

Sinclair had been during this time at another window, talking with Miss Amelia Monkland, while they took their coffee; and when she was called away by her mother to make some arrangement about the card-tables, he s ut into the garden,

and turned into the path which led to the summer-house.

Miss Jerrel, who had been watching her opportunity, proposed to Helen and Mr. Heathcote a little walk into the moonlight. Mr. Heathcote giving an arm to each of the ladies, they followed the same path Sinclair had taken. He had almost reached the summer-house, and seeing them advance turned in with the intention of avoiding them, as he fancied himself unperceived in the shadow of the trees.

The movement, however, did not escape the lynx eyes of his persecutrix, who when she was near enough to be certain that she must be overheard, proposed to Helen that they should sit for a few moments upon the little bench by the door, rather than enter a place which was altogether dark; knowing perfectly well that there was no egress but by that door, and that Sinclair must remain where he was or join them, which she was confident he did not wish to [illegible] Helen," she said, "do tell me

Cheapstow is, whom I find so much domesticated amongst you in the few days that I have been absent?"

"The friend and *protégée* of Mrs. Cheapstow, as you see, Fanny."

"That is not what I want—her history I mean."

"I did not know she had any history," answered Helen.

"Nor I neither," joined Mr. Heathcote.

"If that is the case I find I am better informed than either of you. Guess, Mr. Heathcote, where she has been brought up?"

"It is more than I am equal to—in retirement, I suppose."

"Yes, truly," said Miss Jerrel, "in the retirement of a charity-school."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mr. Heathcote, "she is quite a lady!"

"You have been misinformed, perhaps,' observed Helen.

"Not in the least—and the thing is not only possible but true—though I myself was

unwilling to credit it, until I had spoken with her, and found that she has not the education of a chamber-maid."

"You are too severe, Fanny, too unjust," said Helen, "there are many degrees between an ordinary education and your accomplishments."

"Hers is by no means ordinary; on the contrary, it is *tout-à-fait* extraordinary—think of a common soldier's daughter, brought up in the Orphan-school, with the intention of earning her daily bread, or of marrying some man in her own sphere in life, suddenly transplanted, by the sentimental caprice of an old lady, and two old gentlemen, into society so much above her—is not that altogether out of the common way?"

Mr. Heathcote burst into a long, loud, silly laugh, and Helen added—"But her being brought up in this way, is her misfortune, not her fault; and I know, from good authority, that she is well born."

"And yet," exclaimed Miss J
did not know that she had any!

Helen! Helen! your generosity betrays itself!"

"Miss Helen Monkland is so much above the rest of the world," said Mr. Heathcote, gallantly, "that I am not surprised that she feels for this poor girl, whose situation must be very distressing, finding herself, as you say, Miss Jerrel, in society so much above her."

And Mr. Heathcote drew himself up and adjusted his cravat as he spoke.

"And there is nothing finer I have been told," continued Fanny, "than to see Mrs. Cheapstow give her lessons—and show her how she is to do—and tell her what she is to say—and recommend her to keep up her character for simplicity, as the only one she is likely to succeed in, and the one most likely to make the old doctor consent to her marrying his nephew. Oh! the whole thing is charmingly got up betwixt them!—and your friend, Mr. Sinclair, with all his pride, and pretension, and pedigree, will end in being duped by a foundling."

"No one can be sorry for such a self-sufficient supercilious *Scotchman*," answered Mr. Heathcote, laying the accent upon his country, which showed that he intended it to be the climax of Sinclair's unworthiness.

"You are wrong, I think, Fanny, quite wrong in this information," said Helen. "I candidly think Miss Cheapstow is what she seems to be."

"Not in the least, I give you my word; you judge the rest of the world by yourself, which is taking too high a standing for common use. I have often told you, Helen, that you see things as you would wish them to be, not as they are."

"I should be more indebted to you for your good opinion than I can express," said Helen, "if it were not given to me at the expense of another."

"You should value it, Helen," replied Miss Jerrel, "for it is not at the service of every one. I am not one of those who seek popularity by finding all the world faultless."

"You have given us this night a proof of your discernment," said Mr. Heathcote, as they rose to return to the house, "and I quite agree with you."

Miss Jerrel flattered herself that she had set things in a new light in the eyes of Mr. Sinclair, whom she conjectured was within hearing of every word that had been said; but what was her surprise on re-entering the drawing-room to find him seated by Eleonora, talking so quietly, that she was puzzled to think how it could be. "Had he not heard her? and if he had, how did he make his escape unobserved, and how did he retain such self-composure? He must be a skilful manœuvrer, and possessed of more self-command than I gave him credit for," she thought.

Helen Monkland was also curious to observe what effect her generosity had produced upon Malcolm, but during the whole evening she could not perceive any difference in his manners towards her. He was as attentive, as polite as usual; but nothing more,

though Miss Jerrel tried to persuade her, that there was a marked difference in his manners, and that his attentions to Eleonora were only to pique her for the home thrusts she had given him.

"I think we have done wrong, Fanny," said Helen, "I fear he sees through the whole matter, or that girl has really the art which you attributed to her."

The fact was, that Malcolm, as soon as he heard the commencement of this well-concerted conversation, conjectured the drift of the speakers, and foresaw how it was likely to turn; he, therefore, wisely resolved to keep his temper and disappoint their malice by jumping from a window on the other side of the summer-house, which he effected without noise, and had been quietly seated in the drawing-room talking to Miss Cheapstow, while they thought he was forced to swallow all they had prepared for him.

Both the young ladies were, with Miss Amelia, called upon to sing a glee, which relieved Eleonora from the sort of censorship

which she could not help feeling herself to be under. "I shall be so happy when this visit is finished," she said, "and we are again quietly at James Town; here I feel constrained and uncomfortable, I hardly know for what."

"I shall be glad also when the visit is ended," answered Malcolm. "I have seen several things in so different a light to what they appeared to me before, that I dread to think of the time I have to remain here. What am I to do when you are gone?"

"I shall lose most," answered Eleonora, with the utmost simplicity. "You have friends wherever you go, every one seems to have pleasure in your society, and every one seems to be displeased with me, and to have satisfaction in setting all my deficiencies in array against me. The cause of my own unfitness for the world I have so earnestly wished to be in, quite overcomes me."

"Do not, my dear Miss Cheapstow," he replied, "let the envious malice of little minds affect your happiness; your undenia-

ble superiority is the sole cause of the persecution you have met with."

"You are very good, Mr. Sinclair, to try to reconcile me to myself; but I feel my own ignorance so deeply that I almost wish that we were again on board ship, that I might try, with Mrs. Cheapstow's advice, to overcome it."

"And if you *almost* wish to be on board again, Miss Cheapstow, why do you not altogether wish it?" inquired Malcolm in a tone of pique.

"Because you will not be with us," replied Eleonora, with the same tranquillity.

"Pardon me, Miss Cheapstow," he said, "pardon my selfish vanity that could for a moment doubt of the generosity of your mind."

"I do not know what I have to pardon in you," said Eleonora, "you have always been my friend and assistant in the disagreeable things my ignorance has led me into, and I hope always will be."

"I trust so with my whole heart," answered Malcolm; "and, believe me, I shall be more proud of the title than of any other that ever can be bestowed upon me."

Malcolm Sinclair was, as he said, proud of being considered the friend of Eleonora; he felt that the choice was honourable to his character, for, though devoid of experience, she possessed the delicacy and instinctive feeling of character which enabled her to appreciate qualities which were in a manner new to her. Malcolm felt he owed the confidence reposed in him to the integrity of his conduct, and the thought was as gratifying to his self-love, as interesting to his better feelings.

CHAPTER VI.

A fairer isle than Britain never sun
Viewed in his wide career! A lovely spot
For all that life can ask! salubrious! mild!
Its hills are green, its woods and prospects fair,
Its meadows fertile, and to crown the whole,
In one delightful word, it is our home—
Our native isle!

COTTLE.

——————O, wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O, brave new world,
That has such people in't!

SHAKSPEARE.

NEXT morning all our friends took leave of the governor and his family, and returned to their boarding-house in James Town, just in time to see Blue Peter flying, and, as

soon as they came in sight of the harbour, to receive their captain's summons to repair on board.

In our world all enjoyment is followed by parting, and the good doctor had become so much attached to his nephew that he could not suffer the necessity without regret. It seemed to him as if he had recovered the society of his sister in her son; perhaps had she lived to greet his return he would have found a change in the companion of his youth, but Malcolm brought her before him as he had left her in the warmth and generosity and unbroken elasticity of youthful feeling; he looked upon him, and he saw his mother's smile; he listened to him, and he thought he heard her voice; his sentiments seemed to flow from her heart; her kind and generous spirit dictated the words he uttered, and his uncle listened to him with "more pleasure than," as he often delared, "he ever expected to feel again on this side time."

Though those whose advanc

age in life's rough ways must know the vanity of the high hopes and buoyant expectations of early years, still they carry the freshness, the charm, and the promise of the opening spring along with them, and the heart not closed by misanthropy is sometimes willing to forget its own bitter experience, and to hope for the objects of its love after its own hopes are withered. When Malcolm spoke of Fernbraes and the happiness he anticipated in returning there, his uncle permitted his mind to go back to the first years he had spent in India, and the feelings he then experienced at a similar prospect, and he said, "Yes, my dear boy, I trust I shall have the comfort of having you there with me, and that you will enjoy all the happiness I have spent my youth in dreaming of."

Our own cutting experience may very clearly prove that the scourge and the knife are the best disciplinarians of the rebellious human heart, yet such is the instability of human reason that we still hope that others

may attain wisdom by a smoother path, and though we know the rough, bare, up-hill road, exposed to sharp and chilling blasts, to be that which shows the world as it truly is, we still sigh for the sheltered valley, though our bounded visions see little beyond it.

Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow gave Mr. Sinclair a very cordial invitation to make their house his home when he returned to England: an invitation which he told them he sincerely hoped to be able to accept, though his doing so must depend upon the destination of his ship.

Eleonora expressed the sorrow she felt at parting from one who had treated her with uniform kindness; had she known the interpretation her regret might have borne she would certainly have suppressed the expression, but she knew nothing of sentimental feelings; she had never read a novel, and she had never associated or conversed with those who were better informed upon such subjects than herself. From the

moment she saw the doctor's nephew, she had been quite certain that he must be good and amiable like his uncle, though she thought it was impossible that one so very much admired, and so capable of pleasing every one he conversed with, could have the same indulgence for her;—her ignorance appeared greater in her own eyes than it had ever done before, when she compared his manners, and instruction and acquirements with her own; and her gratitude to Malcolm was proportionably great, when she found that instead of exposing her as others took pleasure in doing, he gave her assistance and direction with as much kindness and steadiness as his uncle could have done,—and as he was more constantly near her, she had become accustomed to consult him when she wanted advice.

Brought up as she had been it was impossible that she could guess what the world would say of such friendship; ignorant of the usages of society, and having no guide but her own feelings, she was not conscious

of any reason for disguising the regret which she really and naturally felt; though, after they had fairly left St. Helena, and seen its rocky mountains fade in the distance, she spoke no more on the subject, but set herself with double application to acquire the different branches of education, and follow the studies Mrs. Cheapstow judged proper for her and; in the seven weeks spent at sea, before the Ruthven Castle reached England, Eleonora laboured with unceasing industry, not to acquire accomplishments which were at present out of her reach, but to store her mind with useful knowledge, and accustom herself to reflect on what she read. It would have been difficult in many cases to make up for the time which had been lost; but when Nature has given the capability, and there is inclination to profit by it, no time is too late to learn,—as the doctor often told Mrs. Cheapstow, nature goes twice as far as education, and rarely does any thing by halves.

They were running along under es

with a favourable breeze, when "Land" was announced from the maintop. "It is old England!" said Colonel Cheapstow, when the welcome cry reached his ears. "Come, my dear, come Eleonora, let us go on deck, and see a sight dear to British eyes. There, Eleonora, there is the country of your fathers," he said, pointing to the long low dark blue line which streaked the horizon.

"Ay," said the doctor, mounting the poop stairs, while his friends were talking with the captain, and looking through his telescope as if they would anticipate the vessel's motion, "how well I remember the day I lost sight of that shore, thirty years ago!"

He leaned over the railing, and covered his face with his hands as he retraced in his own mind the changes which those years had brought about. "There is England," he thought; "and I am returned to it in health, and with a moderate portion of strength, and with riches beyond what my most sanguine wishes ever anticipated; but what do I expect from it all? Where are

my hopes? blighted, withered, and dead—who will rejoice on my arrival, but from interested motives? Who is there to recognise my altered form, or to welcome an exile after his wanderings? And yet this is the hour I have so ardently longed for!"

The good doctor felt the ingratitude of such thoughts just at that time, and strove to banish them from his mind; he staid on deck musing over bitter fancies until the dusky outline was lost in the closing evening, and a chill damp shore-wind drove him to his cabin.

In the night a pilot came on board, bringing with him a pile of English newspapers, and the early fruits of the season. "These strawberries," said Colonel Cheapstow, as he helped himself to some at breakfast, "are nothing to what I remember them—the strawberries of my time were quite different."

"I fear the difference is in us, Cheapstow," returned his wife; "the flavour is just what

it used to be, though our perception of it is different."

"It is mortifying to think," said the doctor, "how much we are the creatures of habit; and that, after a long absence from our native land, we should return and find our early delights powerless to please. We let ourselves forget that we left them when all things had that power—when the world wore an enchantment it can never wear again."

"I am charmed with the strawberries," said Eleonora, "they are cool and fresh, and fragrant, and I like them just because they come from the country I have so earnestly wished to see—they seem to me like a surety that I shall be there."

"Yes, Eleonora, you are right," said the doctor; "youth is the season we should return if we would really relish the pleasures which haunt us in memory through all the years of our exile. It is not when we see too much, and know too much, and

feel too much that we can take up the dreams which our departure broke off, or return to the unvitiated, uncorrupted tastes of early life. Oh! but it's a severe disappointment for a man to find himself at variance with his memory—to have the things before his eyes, which he has all his life fancied would be a delight, and to find that they are so no more, and that, after having looked at and examined them on every side, he is forced to the hopeless confession, that they are the same, and the change is in him."

Those who never leave their own country, who spend their lives in the midst of objects and feelings familiar to them from childhood, can no more imagine the sensations which overpower a returned wanderer, than the man who has married the woman of his choice in the flower of her youth, and has seen her grow old by his side, can enter into the sorrowful surprise of him who, after long absence, finds the blooming beauty,

whose appearance at seventeen had filled his memory, metamorphosed into the wrinkled grandmother.

Off the Isle of Wight another pilot came on board to take the passengers into Portsmouth; and, well aware of the impatience of those he had to do with to set foot on their native land again, he did not lose such a good opportunity of making them pay for the pleasure, and securing to himself some of the rupees, of which it is the joint effort of every one at Portsmouth to lighten passengers.

Of all the cold, chilling bath shocks which a man can receive, none are more vexatious than the ruthless piracy with which he is treated on his return to his own free land. Every one seems to consider him as a pigeon to be plucked, or a contraband article to be squeezed and examined before he is suffered to pass—one who ought to be subjected to the observation of professional spies, the insolence of custom-house officers, and the

impositions of pilots, watermen, and *maîtres d'hôtels.*

The little vessel in which our friends landed, danced like a cork in the swell, and was so low in the water that the waves broke over her, and compelled the passengers to remain under hatches, notwithstanding the stifling closeness and heat. They were accompanied by the custom-house officers, who minutely inspected every individual before they were permitted to set foot on English ground, and who sent the single trunk which every passenger was permitted to take from the ship for present use, to undergo an overhaul at the Portsmouth custom-house. Mrs. Cheapstow was greatly provoked, when after this inspection an officer made his appearance with a written paper in his hand, containing a list of muslin dresses which had been taken out of Eleonora's portmanteau, and which they thought proper to arrest upon the plea of "their being too fine for the wear of a private individual, *and only fit for a duchess!*"

"By this means, you will arrive in London, my dear," said Mrs. Cheapstow, looking over the list, "without a single thing to put on."

"What!" said Colonel Cheapstow, "what do you say, my dear? it is not possible that they can have dared to stop any part of our baggage? If I had these fellows at Lucknow, I would teach them how to behave! Low Europeans presuming to judge what is proper for the wear of a member of Colonel Cheapstow's family! And am I to meet with such treatment before I have well set foot on English ground? Unparalleled insolence!—the first thing I shall do upon my arrival in London will be to represent it to the proper authorities and have redress. Do you know whose baggage you have arrested?" demanded the colonel, turning to the custom-house officer.

"That's no business of ours, sir," returned the man in a sulky tone, "we do our duty."

"He is right, my dear," said Mrs. Cheap-

stow, taking her husband's arm, with the intention of stopping an altercation which could only have a disagreeable effect, "I am half dead with that horrid boat. Think no more of this business now—in town you will have a better chance of bringing them to reason."

Vexed with the Custom-house and fatigued with the pilot-boat, Mrs. Cheapstow chose to rest all day at a Portsmouth hotel,—if, indeed, any rest could be found in such a boisterous situation.

"What can we have for dinner?" demanded the colonel. "What have you got in the house?"

"Every thing, sir," was the ready answer.

"Game?"

"No, sir; this is not the season, sir."

"Fresh salmon?"

"It has gone out, also, sir."

"Cod and oysters, then?"

"We had a beautiful head and shoulders yesterday, but unfortunately it was dressed

for the corporation dinner, and for oysters, sir, I don't think, sir, there are any."

"Then what *have* you got—what can you give us?" demanded the colonel.

"A fine duck, sir, beefsteak, or a tender mutton-chop, sir,—roast pork, calf's head, or—"

"Fit food for a man-of-war's man, who has been fed for a whole voyage on salt provisions!" said the colonel, interrupting the unsatisfactory list. "Have you nothing more suitable for us? At least give us some roast-beef and a turkey, or any thing that we have not had every day for the last six months—and vegetables—every variety of vegetables you can procure."

While the colonel was settling the dinner, Eleonora was examining the house—carpeted rooms—beds and windows covered with drapery met her eyes for the first time—in short, the whole place, and the whole manner of it was unlike any thing she had ever seen before, and she earnestly wished that Mr. Sinclair had been there to show

her the town, as none of her senior friends seemed much disposed to walk after their tossing in the pilot-boat; but as this was not the case, she could only look from the windows, and wonder what every one could have to do in such a hurry—all those she had ever seen in India had always time enough for whatever was to be done.

Colonel Cheapstow was shocked and amazed by busy feet trotting up and down stairs, and trudging as unceremoniously over his head as if he had not been there to hear them. Cussim Ali was harassed by the impertinent observation of those in the kitchen — his master was low-spirited at sight of so many human faces, none of which wore a smile for him, or welcomed his return; and the whole party were equally glad when next morning brought their post-chaises to the door, and they found themselves again in motion, not riding over Neptune's unstable domain, but bowling along a good hard turnpike-road [illegible]e only

who have been for months tossed upon every vagrant wave which chooses to lift its head under them, can tell the pleasure of finding themselves on the firm and solid earth, and hearing the lark sing instead of the sea-birds shrieking to the gale.

Our travellers looked with delight upon every sweet cottage and small farm on the road. Those who have been out of England know that magnificent houses and stately castles are to be met with in other parts; but the beauty, the neatness, the extreme propriety and comfort of rural and humble life are peculiar to merry England. The rich live at ease all the world over, but the habitations of the lowly are alone beautiful in England.

"What lovely retreats!" said Eleonora, who had never before seen any thing of the kind. "Surely the people who live here must be perfectly happy. I could not have imagined such luxuriance and such order. This is different to Choultry plain, or the

rocks of St. Helena, and the people who walk about are so alert, and so healthy, and so ruddy. Oh, it is a new world!"

"A new world, indeed, my dear," answered Colonel Cheapstow, "and one I hope you will find better than the old, though they have not given you a favourable specimen in not leaving you a gown to put on."

"That does not signify," joined Mrs. Cheapstow, "in London money does every thing in five minutes: we are not obliged to have durzees and cut cloth. You have only to speak the word, and in native phrase, 'your order is executed.'"

Dr. M'Alpin had no other companion than Cussim Ali, who, upon entering the postchaise, where his master chose he should be, rather than be exposed on the outside, wanted to squat himself in the bottom at his sahib's feet, a situation the doctor would by no means admit of. Cussim next essayed to stand, for the idea of seating himself by his master was a liberty which

never entered into his mind as practicable; and when the doctor at length made him understand that it was actually to be done, he gathered himself up in a corner, into as small compass as possible, and drew his feet in under him out of sight, resolved at least not to be guilty of the indecorum of leaving such unpolite extremities in view.

The doctor mused on the fair scene before him, and found with pleasure that it even exceeded his recollections,—or perhaps it would be more just to say, that having seen more of the globe which we call ours, he was better able to appreciate what his eyes now looked upon.

"This is a country worth returning to," he said, speaking aloud according to his custom when his mind was full.

—"Sahib?" answered his attendant.

"Look out of that window, Cussim," he said, "and tell me if you do not think this a good land—a very good land?"

"It is a good country," answered his attendant, gravely, thrusting out his head as

he spoke, in obedience to his master's orders. "It is a very good country for white gentlemen, sahib, but for black *Admies* (children of Adam) Hindostan is better. I do not see the Ganges, and I do not see the rice-fields."

"It is natural, Cussim, very natural," said the doctor, speaking kindly to the poor native, who seemed to be painfully impressed with the novelty of every thing he saw about him, as he felt that he was never again to be warmed by the rays of his own bright sun; "but never fear, Cussim, though you do not see the Ganges and the rice-fields, you will have plenty of water, and of rice too, where you are going—and you will always be with me."

"The sahib's pleasure be done," answered Cussim, respectfully, at the same time drawing himself back into his corner like a snail in his shell, when he found that his turbaned head was an object of wonder to every one who passed on the road. His Asiatic gravity was greatly shocked by such

an unseemly display of curiosity in men; and he conceived but a mean opinion of those who were so ignorant of the common forms of civility as to indulge it, and were weak enough to take part in the disreputable and low-caste amusements of laughing on a public road, fit only for monkeys or women.

Colonel Cheapstow had not been two days in London before he discovered that instead of living above the world as he used to do, at a distance from its bustle and turmoil, and vulgar occupation, he was let down to actual contact with its gross materials. To mix in the streets with people who never thought of giving way, and to be disturbed by noises which no orders could silence, to be brushed by in walking, or pressed upon in crowded rooms, were acts of familiarity which made him almost wish that he had retained his own space and place at Lucknow.

"How persons," he said to his wife, "can go to the opera or the theatre, my dear, who have not guards to protect them, is more than I can understand; I really cannot en-

dure to see you elbowed in a crowd, indeed I can hardly bear it myself. Low-caste Europeans have no idea of what is due to their superiors; people at home are so accustomed to be inconvenienced, that they seem to have no feeling upon the subject. I could not have imagined so many annoyances. Small, stifling rooms, stuffed to an excess without a breath of fresh air in circulation, heated by gas and sea-coal, kitchens in the house, and the smell of cooking, single chairs at dinner, and your next neighbour so close, that the servants stretch over your shoulders, and oblige you to take the trouble of asking for what you want instead of anticipating your wishes—give me the watchful attendance of Mussulman servants, who supply my wants in silence, and who know that they should neither be seen nor heard, though like invisible spirits they are always at hand to minister to the comfort of their masters."

"You will get reconciled to all these things, Cheapstow, as other people do."

"Never, never; I do assure you every repetition only makes the thing more offensive. Is one who who has filled a conspicuous station, to mix *pele-mele* with the multitude, to be jostled by every little ignorant citizen whose longest voyage has been across the channel, and whose greatest command the presidency of a reading-room? I shall sooner leave London and never set foot in it again. It was but yesterday, in getting out of my carriage, that a chimney-sweeper almost threw me down at the very door of our hotel here."

"But as that is not an every-day's occurrence," answered Mrs. Cheapstow, "we must just overlook it, and bring Eleonora into the world a little before we fix upon our future residence. Here are volumes of answers to the budget of notes you sent out; it would appear that all our friends have not left town yet, and there are invitations for the next month."

"I detest the trouble of going to other people's houses, where one is sure to be un-

comfortable, and where one is sure to have dessert in the room one has dined in, though it is filled with the fumes of dinner. I should like, my dear, keeping to my old habit of receiving my friends in mine."

"Impossible, Cheapstow! the thing is not to be expected in London; you must get over those *qui-hie* habits, and live like other people."

"I shall never live like other people, at least not like any I see here; and when M'Alpin leaves us, as he says he intends to do to-morrow, I do not see what is to keep us in town."

CHAPTER VII.

We twa hae rin aboot the braes,
And pu'ed the gowans fine,
But we've wander'd many a weary foot
Sin' auld lang-syne.

BURNS.

DR. M'ALPIN, impatient to be under his own roof-tree, only staid in the great capital to pass his baggage through the India House, and set forth with Cussim Ali for Fernbraes, where he arrived without accident or interruption one chilly day in the beginning of June.

Before ushering him into his paternal mansion, it may be as well to account for some of the changes he met with there;

and which, as he was ignorant of the circumstances which led to them, he was not prepared to expect.

His sister, soon after his departure from home, had been persuaded to marry a man every way unworthy of her; one whose only recommendation was, the possession of the small estate of Stoneyards, four miles from Fernbraes;—this, however, was sufficient to determine her parents on the match; their only son had left them, and they were resolved that their daughter should remain—fixing her at Stoneyards was the most effectual means, and there accordingly she was fixed.

After the death of her grandfather, who survived her father and mother, her husband, Mr. Sinclair, took the management of Fernbraes for her absent brother, and took upon himself to make many alterations, which he insisted were improvements; in conformity as he said to Dr. M'Alpin's letters upon the subject. It was in vain that she remonstrated against his cutting down a bank of large old wood, which extended on the

east side of the house, between it and the sea. Three straggling, scathed, Scotch firs were all that she could rescue from the axe; he insisted that the trees were rotten at the heart, and that it would be much better to remove them, and plant young in their place, which had a chance to be well enough grown before the laird came home, though she soon ascertained that the old Scotch firs were the only trees amongst the number decayed at heart, and that the rest were sold to a wood-merchant for a pretty considerable sum.

The house, a large high irregular mass of gray granite, with a single tower at one end standing sentry over the rest, was situated upon the north slope of a steep hill, overlooking the sea which formed a bay of some extent, and wherein the tide was at this moment leaving a stony beach interpersed with pools of water. Upon the face of the mountain, built by Stoneyards for the convenience of his own sheep, which he sometimes chose to pasture there, were several low white

stone dykes, conspicuous in all the newness of their erection;—neither shrub or tree had the courage to show itself above them, and encounter such sharp keen breezes as were there in circulation.

A broad belt of thick, dark Norway pines, circled the upper part of the hill upon which the house was placed, and gave to view the mountain's gray stony top towering up in unclothed nakedness. This wood, with the exception of the before-mentioned old Scotch firs, and a few straggling stunted young trees, which had been stuck in to replace their ancient predecessors, and to shelter, if such a thing were possible, a nondescript summer-house planted on the shoulder of the hill, and constructed on the model of one of the small Mussulman temples so common in India, but which wanted, alas! the spreading banian which ought to have sheltered it, was all the wood which graced Fernbraes.

When Dr. M'Alpin's carriage turned from the south road, round the shoulder of Ben

Morvan, the driver of his post-horses took off his hat, and welcomed his honour home to Fernbraes; at the same time stopping for a moment, that the laird might have an opportunity of contemplating the inheritance to which he was returned.

The doctor could hardly believe his eyes when he looked on the place he had used to think a paradise.—"Where are the trees?" he said in his old way, speaking aloud.

"Sahib?" answered Cussim Ali, but his master heeded him not.

"Where is the grove in which I used to sit with my dear sister? Where is the great old tree under which she used to feed the thrushes in the spring evenings? My grandfather, I know, never would have cut down that, and woe betide him that has done the ill deed! And this is the house I used to think a palace!—Not but that it is big enough for me, and all the friends I have now to put into it."

The doctor sunk back in melancholy abstraction, and the horses moved on. The first

human creature whom he could recognise was his worthy foster-brother Duncan Maclean, who was on the watch to meet him. The doctor sprung out of the carriage, and Duncan took his offered hand with right good will, though there was as much of sorrow as of joy in his looks, to see the changes which years had made upon one he always had called "his young master."

They both stood looking in each other's faces, trying to recall the days which were gone; but it was only in the clear blue eye, which sparkled with honest joy at his friend's return, that Dr. M'Alpin could yet trace the hearty, active, merry lad he left, in spite of the sedate brow, furrowed cheeks, and white locks which he saw before him; and perhaps it was still more difficult for honest Duncan, when he surveyed the laird's altered frame, to identify it with the blithe swanky he remembered, upon whose brow a mother's parting could hardly leave a shade.

"If your mother, and the Lady Stoneyards were but here to see this day!" said Duncan, when he felt that the changes in his master's appearance had not extended to his heart. "If they could but look up and see you cross your own threshold!"

"They will look down, Duncan," said the doctor,—"they will look down and see it, I have no doubt."

"It's the proudest day that has shone on Fernbraes since those that spelt the name of M'Alpin left it," said Duncan; "and it is more joy to me to see you here, the rightful heir, and my foster-brother—my own old mother's child, than if the best lairdship in broad Scotland had been made mine, and every thing that belongs to it."

"You will find, Duncan," said the doctor, sensibly affected by the voice of genuine affection, "that I have not forgotten my father's hearth-stone, nor them that used to be round it; though, woe's me! who is there now but yourself, and my good old nurse, your kind and excellent mother?"

"My mother is not in this part of the country now," answered Duncan.

"Not in this part of the country?—not in my house when I have come home to it?—how is that?"

"If your honour please," said Duncan, "we will speak anent that another time—the friends will be waiting for your coming."

As the doctor drew near the house he observed that some recent attempts had been made to plant shrubberies round it, but that nipped by the ungenial atmosphere, the common plants had withered away, and dry twigs stuck into the ground only remained to mark the ineffectual effort. The more hardy, such as larches and spruce firs had hardly attained the height of common currant-bushes. The gravel which covered the walks was mixed with shells, and bordered by sea pinks, the only flowers which appeared in bloom.

It is easy to imagine to what a train of thoughts all this gave birth in the doctor's mind, and how much he was pleased when in

the midst of them he stopped at his own house to see a dozen strange heads thrust out of the window, gazing with wonder upon him and his satellite Cussim Ali, getting out of the carriage, as if he had been "some far awa beast," as Duncan afterwards expressed it.

As soon as the door was opened by a white-haired lad, in a full new suit of M'Alpin livery, out flew a pack of dogs of all sorts and sizes, barking and jumping, first on the servants and then into the carriage, to the utter amazement of poor Cussim Ali, and down came Miss Jamesina, in her best bib and tucker, saying,—"Uncle, ye are welcome back to auld Caledonia!"

The first sound of her voice, and the first glance of her square figure and broad face, damped the eagerness with which her uncle would have otherwise greeted the child of his sister; she had no resemblance to Malcolm or his mother—still she was her daughter, and as such he received her cordially. All the rest came crowding round them, and

Miss Jamesina presented the whole race of nephews, and nieces and cousins (of whose names even her uncle was ignorant); and also her father, who shook his arm as if he would have shaken it out of its socket, and, while he retained his fingers in his iron grasp, roared in a stentorian voice, "Laird, ye are welcome home again—and a bin house, and a bonny ye are come to—I'm no thinking ye hae seen mony like it in the Indies."

The doctor's ears were stunned, and his fingers thrilled under the powerful pressure laid upon them; but he strove to master what at the moment he was disposed to think his own nervous irritability, and received his new relations with a good grace, though two minutes were sufficient to convince him that his absent favourite, Malcolm, was the only friend he could find amongst them.

The glance of an eye, or the tone of a voice often displeased him more than the things said or done; they indicated the fountain from which the others flowed, and the

careful, calculating, hypocritical sound of Miss Jamesina's voice repeating her well-set compliments of welcome, was hateful to his ears from the first moment it reached them, and almost more odious than the ignorant, boisterous selfishness of her father.

The eldest son, or "the young laird," as he was called, possessed the distinguishing characteristics of hundreds of his cast, in that and every other country. He was, as far as any human creature can be so, without mind, well-looking, and was certainly a well-grown, idle, obstinate, useless man, who considered his father as his steward, and his sisters as servants born to consider his interests, bear his complaints, and humour his caprices.

The second daughter, Mrs. M'Askel, seemed one whose instinct went no further than personal comfort and self-interest, and when neither of these were in question, had nothing either to do or to say.

The youngest son, Hector, was bred a writer, with the intention of qualifying him to act as factor for his friends, and sheriff-

clerk for the county—in him were concentrated the distinctive abominations of the whole family—his father's vulgarity—Jamesina's worldly wisdom — Mrs. M'Askel's ignorance—Hugh's obstinacy—Barbara's vanity—and not one of the good qualities of Malcolm. He had been sent to college to learn assurance and conceit, and returned well qualified to make his way by alternate bowing and pushing.

Cousins, and other more distant relations composed the group, whom Miss Jamesina successively introduced to her uncle, and when this necessary ceremony was over, Dr. M'Alpin said, addressing his brother-in-law, "I left your son Malclom, well at St. Helena; I wish I could have brought him here with me to take part in this meeting, and to help me to receive my friends in the home of his forefathers."

"You will not miss him," answered Stoneyards, "when his eldest brother is with you. Hugh come here, and take the place your birthright gives you. He is so bash-

ful, Fernbraes," continued his father, laying his large hand on the broad shoulders of the tall, stout, awkward young man. "This is our young laird."

The promising scion attempted an uncouth bow;—his uncle at the moment felt the drift of his father, to have him in a manner formally recognised as the heir apparent of Fernbraes, which he determined at once to counteract.

"Say yours, if you please," he answered laughing, "for me I am a gay bachelor, and have not determined to leave my lands to other people's bairns."

"Well, well," rejoined Stoneyards. "I hope at all events that ye hae brought a good appetite with ye, for we are just staerving; it is noo past five o'clock, and I'm sure the dinner's burnt to a stick."

"Yes indeed," answered Miss Jamesina, "and my dear uncle will take cold standing here without his hat. Put on your hat, uncle; ye are amongst friends ye know, and there is no use for so much ceremony."

The doctor gave his arm to the speaker, in her quality of *dame du château*; while the rest of the party followed, rushing up stairs, with noise enough, as one of the elderly cousins declared, "to deave a miller."

"Since it is so near the dinner-hour, and we are pressed for time," said the doctor, looking round on the assembled party, when they had all reached the drawing-room; "my friends will, I trust, excuse me while I take off the dust I have brought with me. I shall not keep you long waiting."

Cussim Ali understood his master's signal, and departed to open his portmanteau.

"Hoot," said Stoneyards, hastily, "hoot, Fernbraes, ye are no going to dress noo; ye are as well dressed as man can be; did ever any body see the like when the dinner is just coming on the table!"

"Indeed, uncle, ye are too particular," joined Miss Jamesina; "ye forget that ye

are among friends, and there is no use for so much ceremony."

"Excuse me, Jamesina; I am not fit to come into lady's society with the dust of a turnpike-road on my face, and thistle-down in my hair; but an old bachelor's toilet is not very long, and I beg that you will not detain dinner on my account, Jamesina. Mr. Sinclair I beg that you will not wait a moment for me."

"Heard ever any one the like!" said Mrs. M'Askel. "No—no, laird, it would be but a bad beginning if we were to sit down to dinner the first day in your own house without you at the foot of the table. We know better what is due to the head of the house than such a thing as that."

"Between you all," said Stoneyards, "the end of the matter will be, that the dinner will be burnt to a cinder. Ceremony on a' sides, is but sma' proof o' friendship, and what I hae never given into, with my friends, as ye see, Fernbraes."

"Do not break through your old custom, then, for *me*, Mr. Sinclair. Nothing but the impossibility of doing otherwise, would make make me keep my friends waiting for a moment."

"Well, well, as ye are determined to go, and the ladies to wait, and let the dinner take its chance, the best thing that can be done is to waste no more time in talking aboot it; the sooner this dressing is begun, the sooner it will be finished."

"A reasonable conclusion.—Ladies, I pray excuse," said the doctor, leaving the room.

"How particular for an old man!" said Miss Jamesina when he was out of hearing.

"How civil!" said Mrs. M'Askel.

"Yes, if there were any young ladies who had seen the world, to dress for," said her brother Hector, casting a contemptuous glance upon his country cousins and sisters, and strutting up to the glass over the chimneypiece, and adjusting his neckcloth.

"For my part, I don't see the use of taking

all that trouble, only amongst a person's family," said Mr. Hugh, balancing his leg over the arm of a large chair, into which he had thrown himself; "I would rather see my dinner than any thing in the world, at this minute."

"The only reasonable speech that I have heard amongst you," joined his father; "how any man can think of his outside in place of his inside at this hour, is what I do not well understand."

Mrs. M'Askel, for the benefit of some of her hearers, persisted in applauding her uncle's practice; and Jamesina, though she feared the dinner *might* suffer by it, was disposed to regard it as an indication that a man who was so particular about dress could not be altogether indifferent about furniture; and she permitted her fancy to please itself with the alterations her taste designed, and which she prognosticated his would sanction, in the decorations of the old-fashioned drawing-room they occupied at the moment.

Mr. Hector, who had been at the college

of Edinburgh, consequently might be supposed to know something of these matters, cast a critical glance on the neckcloth of his uncle as soon as he entered the room, and running up familiarly towards him offered to arrange it for him in a manner "*plus comme il faut.*"

"Thank you, Hector," said the wearer, drily, "I have been accustomed to wear my neckcloth in this way for the last five-and-twenty years, and no one ever touches it but Cussim Ali."

"Five-and-twenty years!" echoed Mr. Hector, bursting into a loud laugh, in which his brother joined, taking down his leg, however, from its graceful position across the arm of the chair. "Wear a tie of the same kind for five-and-twenty years! Why, my dear sir, the fashion changes with us every three months, and nobody that has seen the world would be behind the fashion."

Here the speaker threw a triumphant glance on the row of young ladies, before whom he was politely standing with his

feet spread and his hands thrust into his pockets.

"That is to say, Hector," answered his uncle, "those whose world is bounded by the Tweed; but there are more things beyond it than you dream of in your philosophy, and amongst the number is, that men never occupy themselves with their own egotistical concerns in the presence of ladies," he said, bowing to the circle as he spoke.

"Thank you, Fernbraes," said Mrs. M'Askel, who in her character of matron considered herself called upon to render thanks for the less privileged members. "We shall all thank you for such a good lesson."

"A fine sort of a lesson indeed!" interrupted the incorrigible Hector; "it would be long before I would let a black touch my neckcloth."

The whole party, one after another now asked the doctor if he did not admire the prospect from the windows,—if he had ever seen any thing like it; and as his rapture did not come up to *their* expectations,

Stoneyards declared he did not deserve to have such a fine place, when he thought so little of it;—and that it had been greatly improved since it came under his management. He informed him how much kelp he had upon his shores, how many sheep he could pasture, and then launched into a long detail of the fishings, which led him to the county meetings.

All the time he was speaking, as the doctor afterwards confessed to a friend, he was sitting thinking within himself how it could be, that he could hear all these things with so little pleasure. "If any body at Lucknow had told me the like," he said, "I would have sat up all night to hear him; but when the thing was before my eyes, it could not please me, and I felt a sort of unreasonable vexation that people should expect me to occupy myself about such matters,—or perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say, that I was provoked that they should take me for one of themselves. Stoneyard's voice closed my ears and my heart against every word he had to say."

CHAPTER VIII.

A change we have found there, and many a change
Faces and footsteps and all things strange!
Gone are the heads of the silvery hair,
And the young that were have a brow of care,
And the place is hush'd where the children play'd—
—Nought looks the same save the nest we made!

MRS. HEMANS.

BEFORE Mr. Sinclair had done detailing these important matters to Dr. M'Alpin, the same liveried attendant thrust in his white head to say, "Dinner's ben." The doctor recollected the consumah's folded hands and profound salaam; but the company, like a flight of brahminee kites, started from their seats at the summons, hardly giving him time

to offer his arm to Mrs. M'Askel, the only married lady present; for, as Miss Jamesina informed him, she had only asked the *nearest friends.* The young ladies of all ages, or "the lassies," as Stoneyards familiarly called them followed; while the courteous young laird drew up the tops of his riding-boots, until they had settled their precedency, and then sneaked after them to the dining-room, where, with as much noise as they rose, they all sat down again.

At the bottom of the room in a capacious chimney blazed a great peat-fire, surrounded by a regiment of bottles. "Look at that, Fernbraes, and see what a good steward I have made for ye!" cried his brother-in-law, "I havena let them, like a' the rest o' the spend-thrifts in the country, burn coals from the next borough town, when ye hae enough on your own estates for the hale country side, only for the trouble of casting."

The doctor was manfully resolved that on that day no word of complaint should p his lips; he should take every thing just

he found it, and arrange things more to his own taste afterwards.

A large dish of fresh boiled salmon, which might contain three or four fish cut up into slices, smoked at the bottom of the table; a tureen of *hodge-podge* at the head,—a side of roast-mutton, and four boiled fowls, all in a row, faced each other. In the centre a capacious dish of some sort of cream stood curdling in the steams of the fish.

The doctor made an attempt to seat himself away from the fire by Mrs. M'Askel, but Miss Jamesina, taking the head of the table, loudly called upon him to take his own place in his own house at the foot; a proposal which was echoed from mouth to mouth all round the table, in the midst of shuffling of feet, and pushing out and in of chairs, sufficient of themselves to unstring the best set nerves, without the addition of the peat-fire, on which the doctor cast a look as he placed himself before it.

The lady of the mansion remarked, "It's no usual for us, uncle, to have such fires in

the month of June; but knowing in the Indies ye were accustomed to be warm, I was afraid that ye might take cold;—and indeed a fire is no a bad thing here, any day in the year when we have an east wind."

"It was kindly remembered, Jamesina; but as I have not been used to sit near fires for many a year, I will thank you for a screen," answered her uncle.

The screen was brought, and the business of the table fairly commenced,—or as Stoneyards expressed it, "every one fell to." The master of the feast was sitting in misery behind the smoking salmon; and, to add to his annoyance, Miss Jamesina frequently reproaching him with setting a bad example to the company.

Stoneyards, as soon as he could clear his mouth, and spare a moment for speaking, remarked, that "the laird had certainly forgotten to bring his appetite home with him; but that if he staid any time amongst them, it would be sure to follow him overland"—a witticism and prophecy which was received

with great delight by the hearers, and he went on:

"But since for the present, ye winna eat, laird, ye'll no hae forgotten to drink; that's one of the things memory never fails in. Here's to your hearty welcome, and the speedy arrival of your appetite."

Thus challenged, the doctor was obliged to acknowledge the civilities showered upon him with unsparing hand; and, though he had not for many a long yearseen port wine, he was obliged to swallow the harsh liquid in its worst, and half-boiled state.

The table was no sooner cleared and covered with decanters, which were misty by the smoking wine poured into them, than a round of boisterous toasts were drunk to his "welcome to his native land, and the house of his fathers."

"May the M'Alpins flourish!" roared out Stoneyards. "Gentlemen, fill your glasses; and ladies too, ye must do the same, ye canna pass the toast. Here, young man," he said, addressing his son and heir,—"ye are a

M'Alpin, by name and by nature—fill to the brim and drink, "May the M'Alpins flourish!"

Then followed "The ancient roof-tree of Fernbraes;" and fifty more toasts containing the same sentiment in a different form.

Had Dr. M'Alpin beheld his table surrounded by those he would have wished to have seen there,—by those who really felt interest in his wellbeing and happiness,—his kind heart would have been gratified; but the people at that moment around him looked upon him and his fortune as their own prey, and their servility and hypocrisy were doubly disgusting. Stoneyards was a sort of man Dr. M'Alpin never could have liked at any time, and least of all in his own father's chair; for he occupied the very spot his excellent parent filled the last day he dined in that house with his revered grandfather, before his departure for India. The whole scene came to his mind in forcible contrast—the quiet kindness and tender affection he had then experienced, compared with this boisterous revelry.

The faces were all strange to him, not one of the children resembled his sister, nor any of his own family ; they were all their father's children, and the more he saw and heard them the less he liked any of the number. His brother-in-law's apparent resolution, to force Hugh M'Alpin Sinclair upon him as his next heir, was as revolting to the doctor's feelings of independence, as it was to his affection for Malcolm, who was the nephew, and the heir, after his own heart, and who, from the first hour of their meeting, he resolved should inherit from him the possession of his ancestors.

When the ladies left the room, the men drew in their chairs with double good-will, and seemed to be set in for hard drinking,—thinking all other testimonials of their joy imperfect without such a glaring proof;—though unwilling that time should slip away without profit as well as pleasure, they pulled out their pocket-books, and produced samples of wool, talking of merinose, and black-faces, and markets, as if they had been

butchers, and wool-merchants in the bazar. This was more than the good doctor could stand; and though on pain of forfeiting his character for hospitality, which he valued as much as any man, he rose the moment Miss Jamesina sent to say that tea was ready, and begged Mr. Sinclair to take his place,—at the same time telling him, he would much better fill it;—which, indeed, seemed to be his own opinion; for, before the door was shut after the released doctor, he heard him say, as he seated himself at the foot of the table, "I doubt the Laird has been changed upon his passage home, and it's no a genuine Highlander they have sent us after all."

Upon the doctor's arrival in the drawing-room, the ladies complimented him upon his goodness in coming at the first summons; and his niece, Mrs. M'Askel, said with a sigh, which evinced her personal interest in the subject, "Indeed, laird, it's easy to see that ye hae travelled and learnt other manners than what's common here. It's no our gentlemen that would come at the first

call; there they'll sit and better sit, until they canna see their way up stairs. Indeed Fernbraes ye figure by comparison, and the ladies in the Indies hae a fine time o' it, if every one is like you in that particular."

But after all these praises, and hundreds more of the same kind had been bestowed upon the doctor, he did not find the conversation in the least more agreeable, or more to his taste, than that from which he had escaped below. Miss Jamesina, who had evidently an intention to vie with the splendours of Kelpfield, the seat of a neighbouring laird, lately returned from the West Indies, entered into a long detail of all the improvements the present proprietor, Mr. Murdoch Ross, had made and was making.

"Ye'll remember Kelpfield, uncle," she said; "though when ye kenned it had another name—Inchbraken, it was called in those days, but the present laird, who is a man of taste, couldna bear such an old-fashioned name and so he calls it Kelpfield."

"Inchbraken!" answered the doctor;

"and has any one had the folly to change the respectable, well-known name of Inchbraken into such a new-fangled conceit as Kelpfield? Oh, well do I remember Inchbraken, and the friend of my youth, who was there then with his grandfather, as I was here with mine. Kenneth Ross was as kind and true a heart as ever left the Highlands, and as brave a one too as ever faced his country's foes; but he was massacred somewhere on the coast by a troop of wild Arabs. He died without children, I fancy, and grief broke his wife's heart. And is this a brother of his who has the good sense and right feeling to modernize the name of the old place?"

"Yes; and he has modernized the house too, and every thing about it, so much, that no body could guess that it was the same place. You, that like elegance, uncle, will, I warrant, be quite charmed with the tasty, cheerful way in which he has done up the old black drawing-room. He has garred tak down all the oak panels, and put in

mirrors in their place, upon such a beautiful pea-green ground, with rose-coloured borders; and he has China silk chairs and couches, with all the birds and flowers painted upon them that ever grew. You, that have been accustomed to such fine things, will be quite delighted, I am sure; and he has gold eagles, and snakes, and lions' feet to hold up every table and window-hanging. Oh! he has more taste than any body in such things; and I hope, uncle, ye will just take pattern by it, and do up this room just in the same way."

"We shall have time enough to think of all such things," said the doctor, laughing. "I like the oldest things about the house better than the new; and I may not, perhaps, be just such an admirer of Mr. Murdoch Ross's improvements, when I have seen them, as you seem to be."

"But ye know, uncle," returned the pertinacious Jamesina, "that the M'Alpins' is a much older family in the country than the Rosses'; and lately, Miss Abby that was,

Mrs. M'Viper that is, has taken a great deal on herself over me. I remember the time, in her step-mother's life, when she would have been very glad to come to Stoneyards, and to go and stay at my bidding."

The doctor, heartily tired of this gossip, made a second retreat upon pretence of seeing what had become of the gentlemen below. He snatched up his hat in the hall, which still, as well as the rest of the house, was full of the fumes of dinner and whisky-punch, which issued through the long passage of the kitchen, where a jovial band of wassailers was drinking his welcome to the home of his forefathers, in libations deep enough to float a man-of-war. He looked in upon them for a moment, and his presence was greeted by a clang like the sea-fowl from the rocks. Every man started upon his feet, and filling his horn to the brim from the tub round which they were seated, drank many happy returns of the blessed day which had brought the rightful heir to Fernbraes, under his own roof-tree.

"Prosperity to the ancient house of M'Alpin, and may it grow and flourish until there will not be room round the hearth-stone for the numerous branches!"

The doctor cordially shook hands with every individual present; and after thanking them for their good wishes, and saying something kind to each, he in turn proposed a toast—"To the health of Malcolm Sinclair, and his speedy return amongst us."

"A genuine shoot of the old tree," said an ancient tenant; "and as like his own mother, and the race of M'Alpin, as one herring is to another."

"And as like them in the spirit as he is in the body," answered honest Duncan, who acted as master of the ceremonies. "Here's to the health of the brave sailor, and may he soon win name."

Dr. M'Alpin felt more gratified by the testimonies of kindness for his young favourite, which he believed to be sincere, than by all the professions which had been made for himself in the midst of his own relations.

He turned to ask the housekeeper what had become of his solitary Cussim Ali, who was not to be seen.

"Indeed, your honour, I dinna ken; but the black man is no way sociable; for when I desired him to sit down and drink the laird's welcome home with the rest, he made a face and shook his head, as if such things warna natural and proper, and that it wasna fit for man, woman, and bairn to drink their honoured master's joyful return. It's his ignorance, maybe, poor black creature. But let it be what it likes, I would be sorry to see any one less than comfortable on such a day; and since it seems to be his pleasure, I just let him ben to the library, where there is a good fire, and no a single soul to disturb him; and there he is sound asleep on the rug at this blessed minute."

"It was well done, and kindly like yourself, Elspat," answered her master. "I have not forgotten what ye used to do for me; and ye'll no think the worse of him, that he has left his own country, and his own

people, to follow me here, though he does not drink my health, or say much about it. He is in good hands with you, I know, Elspat."

"Ye needna doubt that, or any one that likes ye, Fernbraes," said the old woman, proud of her master's remembrance; "and if he has left his own, to come with you here, it's a sign that there may be a kind heart in a black breast, and that's a thing that Elspat Corbat never set light by yet."

A boisterous shout reached the doctor's ears as he passed the dining-room, and quickened his pace as he stole from the house, and made his way to the "summer-house," or the "temple," or the "mosque," as it was alternately called, and sat himself down on a bench overcome with vexation, the east wind, and the provoking conviction that this was the very place he had used to think the paradise of the whole earth.

"Oh! many a time," he thought, bitterly, looking out upon the sea, black as ink, under

the ruffle of the cutting breeze, and the thick fog rolling down over the hills, "many a time, in the days of my youth, have I wandered upon yon shore, and looked up at this place, and thought that it was the most beautiful beneath the sun, and that I would be the happiest man his bright beams ere shone upon, if I could come home and call it my own; and this very spot, upon which I am now sitting, how *dear* it has been to my heart. How often I have laid myself at full length on the purple heath, and looked out on the hills and the blue rolling sea, and wished to know what was beyond them; and when that wish was gratified, and that I had seen other hills, and other lands, the remembrance of this spot always remained, and I thought that I should like to have a shelter over my head on the very place where I first made the resolution to go to India. When the tidings of my grandfather's death reached me at Lucknow, and that this place, which had always remained in my mind as lovely [as my young fancy thought

it, was become my own, I did not forget this spot where I had so often watched the sun rise on one hand, and set on the other, and I thought then that I would just take the pattern of the mosque at the foot of my garden on the Goompty, and send it home to to have one like it built on this place; but I see—I see," he said, talking to himself, "that they have not done me justice; masons, in this part of the world, do not understand the making of domes."

The fact was, that the good doctor, like Sir Roger de Coverley with his will, had made his plan at Lucknow in a hot day in the rains, when there was hardly a breath of air in circulation, and though it was not common for mosques to have so many doors, nor did he find them in his original, yet as his was to be a summer-house, he inserted four in his plan, facing the cardinal points, that he might never feel the want of fresh supplies of the thin element, which at the moment seemed to have stagnated around him.

He surveyed the melancholy landscape through the mist.—"So it is for *this*, he thought, that I have pined through the best years of my life, and now left the friends with whom I lived in ease and friendship, to come amongst animals like those that are at this moment under my roof; and yet they are most of them my dear sister's children; but no more like her, or like what I figured them to be, than this mosque is like what I intended it. I looked round upon every face amongst them, and did not see a trace of one that I had ever seen before, or that looked with pleasure upon me, except for interested motives. It is true that I am old, and may be nervous and particular, and not just an object to love at first sight; but yet I have been used to affection here, and perhaps miss it more than in any other place. The cordiality with which the tenants drank Malcolm's health was more to me than any thing I have met with since I set foot in Fernbraes."

The good doctor's painful speculations so

completely absorbed his mind that he forgot he was indulging them at a time which would certainly be thought ill-chosen,—on a day which every one but himself, the principal party, had combined to spend in merriment, and which, but for the sharp remonstrance of the piercing easterly wind, might have altogether escaped his memory. Stimulated, however, by such a remembrancer, he retraced his steps, and as soon as he had opened the drawing-room door, a storm of reproaches was unmercifully poured upon him, instead of the praises with which his last entrance had been greeted.

"Where have ye been, uncle?" cried Miss Jamesina; "ye have been wanted to lead off the dance with Mrs. M'Askel, of Long Byars."

"Fernbraes! hae ye left the ladies as ye left us!" shouted Stoneyards, with a roar of half-intoxicated merriment. "They didna even gain what we lost it seems."

"What do they dance in the world beyond the Tweed?" pertly demanded Hector.

"For our part, we never dance any thing but quadrilles in Edinburgh. But perhaps, Fernbraes, you stick to what was the thing five-and-twenty years ago."

Wine had encouraged Mr. Hector to make this pert sally, and it had also given his elder brother assurance to join his rough laugh in chorus; though their father had still sufficient sense of his interest left to see that the subject was not well chosen, and perhaps might not be well taken: he, therefore, after his fashion, tried to put the matter right. "Na doubt—na doubt, but ye dance a' these fine things, Fernbraes; but we that hae never been out of the country stick to our old-fashioned ways. My daughter has been waiting all this time to begin the dance with you."

"I never dance," answered the doctor.

"Never dance!" exclaimed every one at once.—"Impossible! It cannot be! Ye are no lame—for what shouldna ye dance?"

"I made myself quite sure that ye would

certainly lead off the first dance in your own house," said the married lady.

"I have left off dancing for many a long day and year," said the doctor, "and never regretted it, but now that it disappoints you, Mrs. M'Askel—"

"Surely ye'll try," said Miss Jamesina, "if it be only to walk through the figure—I'll learn ye—here, ye have only to stand here, and turn there," said the officious instructer, "nothing is so easy;" but her uncle stood proof against her entreaties and instructions, though he plainly perceived that he lost as much ground in the opinion of the ladies, as he had done in that of the gentlemen, by his flight from table.

"Every man to his taste," said Stoneyards. "For my part I like a dance;" and the uncouth monster reeled up to an elderly young lady, whom he familiarly called his second wife, and seizing her by both wrists, dragged her into the middle of the apartment, while the doctor heard the rest say in whispers to each other, "Not like dancing!

What can he be made of? Never dance! I wonder what's the good of him."

When it was at length yielded that the master of the mansion was not to be forced to dance, or made to stalk about for the amusement of his guests, the dancers commenced, and he was left at liberty to consider by what means he could change the society into which he had been cast. For the present his hopes were distant—but he did not, however, despair; for he justly concluded, that it would perhaps be impossible in the whole country to find another family so vulgar and ignorant as that of his brother-in-law—his sister's he could not bear to call them—when he thought of Malcolm, it was always as his sister's son, the others he only considered as their father's children.

The party were all to sleep in the house, their own homes being too far distant to admit of their crossing moors and bogs at such an hour of the night, though they were then in a season of the year, and a

country where there is little darkness in the month of June. After a supper something in the style of their dinner, but even going beyond it in riotous festivity, the guests and their exhausted entertainer retired to rest.

When Dr. M'Alpin was quietly in his own room, and the door shut after him (for Cussim Ali, sound asleep in a corner, could not be deemed an interruption), he found for the first time that he was at home. The chamber was one that his respected parents had always occupied when they visited his grandfather, and every thing in it remained exactly as they had used it —both their pictures hung upon the wall, and his own when a boy, with his dog Ryno beside him. This picture had been a great favourite of his dear mother's, and the blue highland bonnet, which he had worn in those days, she had hung on a nail over it. He took up a candle, and looked upon her calm, sweet face, which seemed to gaze

upon him again, and felt, if possible, with tenfold force, the loneliness and emptiness of his return.

"And is this all that remains to me," he said, speaking aloud as usual; "are these shadows all I possess? My hopes and expectations, like the originals, are laid in the dust; and yet to have these semblances of my honoured parents look down upon me with what I can fancy a smile, is balm to my heart after such a day as this—it seems an earnest I shall yet have one I love under this roof."

He turned, and saw his sister's picture, in a place where he had not before observed it. The likeness to Malcolm, struck him as a prognostic that his wishes would be realized.

"If Malcolm were but here," he thought, "I would still have some enjoyment in this house—one member of my family whose society would be a pleasure."

But his return was uncertain, and in the mean time what was to be done? The

doctor lay awake half the night, to determine upon what step to take; and at last resolved to see the country in better weather, and make acquaintance with his neighbours, before he fixed his plans—most of them, he thought, must be different from those he had that day seen or heard of.

His father and mother had been born and bred in the Highlands, but he was a gentleman, and she a lady; and though not what the world calls fashionable, they were both full of good sense, and kind and liberal feeling, and kept their establishment in ease and abundance, equally distant from selfish meanness and ostentatious folly; and his grandfather's table, too, was in his time the resort of the worthy and respectable in the county—different from what he had that day seen it, surrounded by vulgar upstart people, who seemed to consider themselves quite at home there, and talking of *their* improvements, gentility, and style—it was too much.

CHAPTER IX.

So little knows she how to value right
The good before her, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
MILTON.

MISS JAMESINA SINCLAIR, as has already been mentioned, was named after her uncle by the common expedient of attaching a feminising *ina* to the noun masculine, a circumstance which procured her the invitation which had made her mistress at Fernbraes, and which she hoped might eventually give her even a more secure right to that title. She knew her uncle's estate was not entailed, and perfectly at his own disposal, but less penetration than hers was sufficient to

convince her that neither of her brothers then at home were likely to be the heirs of his choice.

Her brother Malcolm, indeed, of whom her uncle spoke with such affection—(but then she did not fail to remember that his profession was so dangerous, that perhaps he would not stand in any one's way)—he was absent—his return was precarious—and she knew nothing of the affection which can subsist without the presence of its object. She was present to take advantage of every little circumstance which chance might throw in her way, and by obsequious attentions, and winning insinuations, efface him from her uncle's memory; and was disposed, in her partial acquaintance with human character, to consider the decided preference which her uncle, in his extended acquaintance with the heartlessness and selfishness of mankind, felt for her generous and gallant brother, as a mere caprice of age, which good management might turn to her account.

In her father's house, Jamesina had comparatively little scope for the exercise of the talents with which she was endowed; though she had early in life given a striking proof of her economical foresight, by sowing her little piece of ground she was permitted to call her *own* with flax, which she afterwards spun with her own hands, had wove into a web, and had sold for her by a confidential agent at the Martinmas market: while the old women about the family prophesied "that Miss Jamesina would be a rich lady, for she was a canny hand."

After the death of her mother, when the family management devolved upon her, she found means still further to increase her private purse, counting the contents of which was one of her most heartfelt enjoyments, and the most powerful solace under the harsh treatment her father made her experience when he was ruffled by hard bargains, or the insolence of her elder brother, when he broke out, as he sometimes did, in

invectives upon her penurious management, and increased expenses.

Translated to Fernbraes, a more extensive field was opened for her operations; and she gave many a night to the consideration of the best means of employing such golden opportunities. The old housekeeper, indeed, was likely to prove the most considerable obstacle; and, as it was impossible to act without her knowledge, the prudent lady resolved to use her as a blind instrument; and accordingly, from the day of her instalment, issued her orders for the sale of the superfluous produce of the dairy, poultry-yard, and garden; adding the proceeds wisely to her private hoard.

This manner of proceeding caused her to wrangle with the servants about unnecessary consumption, and she wished to deny them the reasonable comforts of their situation. Once she ventured to insist with old Elspat that Cussim Ali was to have no more rice and fresh butter and chickens for

his curry in the morning, but might just take porridge like the rest. "Fish we need na grudge him, and he may tak that for his curry as often as he likes, and well off he is to get it too." And it was not till the old woman proposed her master as an arbiter, in the customs of black people, which he must know more of than she could pretend to do, that Miss Jamesina was forced to yield the point, though she said "Three hundred and sixty-five chickens a year, for the use of such a creature, to say nothing of other things, was an expense shamefu' to be told, and it was sinful to indulge such pagan creatures in their idolatrous superstition. Not eat good oatmeal, indeed! if she had the will she would make him fast until he would be glad to scrape the porridge-pot. *Him* refuse to eat beef and long kail! it would set the black face of him! She never saw any good of servants put over their betters with such indulgence."

To fill her private purse in her own way, in case of accidents, which Miss Jamesina

wisely considered might occur even to the most long-sighted and meritorious in such a changeable world, and to rival the splendours of Kelpfield, were two projects which had at first occupied all her attentions; now another began to rise which seemed day by day to become more feasible and practicable.

Murdoch Inchbraken, as he used to be called, lately returned from the West Indies with a large fortune to take possession of the patrimony of his elder brother, Captain Ross, who had many years before died in India, had shown Miss Jamesina much more attention than she was in the habit of generally meeting with from any but the inhabitants of the little town of Drumduir, when she occasionally honoured them with her presence. This unwonted occurrence set her active imagination to work; and the more she thought upon it, the more likely it seemed that it was his intention amongst his other changes and improvements to make her mistress of Kelpfield.

"At present he must think that I shall

be my uncle's heiress, and to a reasonable man as he is, who has spent so many years of his life in making money, that must be a great thing. If I could only get this stiff-necked old man to new furnish the house in my taste, or the drawing-room at least, that would confirm people in the notion. Surely nobody was ever harder trysted than I am, between two—when if I take the least open means to gain the one I may lose the other. Oh, if I could only know which it would be best to trust to! But fair and softly; I'll take no rash steps till I see how the bowls are to roll. If this uncle of mine should take it into his head to marry, and there is no saying what queer thoughts come into old men's heads—what would I be then?"

Miss Jamesina turned over in her plotting head all the probabilities on the subject. "Robina Ross is too old," she thought: "at his age, however sensible a man may be, he always chooses a young wife,—but then my uncle is no like any other living creature. However, if such a tantrum does come into

his head, it will go hard with me but I shall find ways and means to break it;" for she very reasonably concluded, that the only use of uncles, who had made fine fortunes in India, was to enable their nieces to cut a figure in the country—give them the means of mortifying and triumphing over their friends—die bachelors, and leave their fortunes to those who could take much better care of them, and who knew better how to enjoy them.

Thus thought the amiable Jamesina, as she sat (like a spider watching his prey) in the midst of the webs of her own fabrication. "I must just try to supplant my brother Malcolm in my uncle's good graces, or at all events get influence enough with him to make people think that he will leave all to me; and if I can but manage that, I'm thinking I could get Kelpfield into the bargain, and then I could easily send Robina out of my way; and while all that is doing, for perhaps it will take time, I had better look after the little present gleanings in case of accidents;—

a well-filled purse is always a good back friend."

Stoneyards too, as well as his daughter, had his own private projects; and he thought, for sundry reasons which may appear hereafter, that the sooner some of them were put into execution, the better would be their chance of success. He therefore "rode over," one morning, willing to commence operations. In the stone lobby he met his daughter, who always liked to be at hand, and to know who went and came to the house.

"Is Fernbraes in the way, Jamesy?" he demanded when he hung up his hat.

"Yes—do you want to see him for any thing particular?"

"I want to speak with him alone," answered her father.

"He is above in the drawing-room,—or the hall as he calls it, for he never gives things names like any other body."

Her father was too full of the business upon which he had come, to waste time in talk-

ing, and as soon as she heard his last heavy footstep mount the stairs, she followed him in the amiable intention of knowing more than he seemed disposed to tell her, and opening a closet on the upper landing-place, in which china was kept, she took her station, where she could easily hear, through a thin partition, every word that passed in the next room.

Her father commenced by a long detail of his losses and crosses in sheep farming; most of which he attributed, notwithstanding his own superior prudence and sagacity, to the small scale upon which, for want of ready cash, he had been obliged to carry on his concerns. He spoke much of the credit that was requisite to carry on such a business with profit. Then he told of a famous opportunity which had that morning come to his knowledge of making a purchase, which would make a man of him at once, if he had only the ready money to advance for it, and ended by making a demand for credit on her uncle's banker.

The doctor had listened all the time in perfect silence; now she heard him ask,

"What is the sum requisite for your projected extension of your concerns?"

Even *she* was surprised, well as she knew her father, to hear the answer,

"I canna just tell. I dinna just ken; but there is no use to set down any precise sum. If ye will give me a letter to your banker, for whatever I may have need for, it will be all right, and I will be able to make this purchase, so much for the advantage of my family, and which will put me above the necessity of troubling my friends in time to come."

"Very likely," she heard her uncle say, in a bitter tone,—"and all that is requisite from me to do that, is to give an unlimited credit on my banker."

"Just that," answered the undaunted Stoneyards. "Where is the use of putting a limit, when I canna precisely tell how much may be required?"

"The use of putting a limit!" by this

time the doctor had lost all patience. "The use of putting a limit! and do you think"—the doctor always spoke broad Scotch when he was animated—" that after spending the last thirty years of my life, far from my native land, and the friends that I loved—for then I *had* friends," he said with emphasis,—" to make a fortune, I am come back to scatter it to the wind, and give credit on my banker without limit? I wonder what sort of a spirit a man can have, that can ask such a thing!"

" Ye are my wife's brother, and I didna think it was such a great thing to ask you to help me with your name, particularly when your money was no' to be in danger."

" Not in danger, say you? not in danger when I give an unlimited credit?—No, no—I will never put it out of my own power to help those that have, or may have claims upon me. As ye say, I am your wife's brother, and if one thousand—or even two thousand can serve you, ye shall be welcome

to it ; but never let me hear of credit upon bankers."

Stoneyards grumbled out his thanks, though his daughter thought, from the tone of his voice, that he was far from satisfied with her uncle's liberal donation. She remained quietly in her concealment, until she heard his ponderous steps upon the stairs, and then made good her retreat. By her act of meanness she had gained a further insight into her uncle's character, which she resolved to use for her own purposes.

"It is curious," she thought, "what a power my mother's name has over him; it is like oil on the raging sea. This fashion of giving away his money, will never do; for if after all he should take into his head to make one of my brothers the heir of Fernbraes (and there is no saying what the male line may make him do—senseless creatures though they be, one and all of them, and no more fit to be compared wi' me than Hugh is to Kelpfield),—but if such a foolish notion does take him, and he goes on at this rate,

he will not have a shilling of ready money left for me. It is true that I could with one word of my mouth, if I were to tell him all that he wants to know about his old nurse Madge M'Lean, put an end to his ever giving a sixpence, or speaking a word to my father, and Hugh, and Hector; but he is so queer in his ways, that if I were to do that it would only make him, may be, think the more of Malcolm, whom he has taken it into his head is just my mother. It would be wiser for me perhaps to 'let sleeping dogs lie,' for if he kent that my father and brothers garred send away the old woman for a witch, his blood would be too much up to conceal who told him, and then perhaps they wad let out something that wadna be so well for me; so I'll just take no notice of what is passed, and let him be doing his ways. After what he said to my father, he canna, I think, wi' ony face come back. Hector is setting off for his 'prenticeship —and Hugh is such a nout that my uncle canna abide him."

"If Malcolm were but like them, I think I wad hae but little to fear; but his senseless harum-scarum way of giving money to every idle old wife about the country, is too like Fernbraes' own tricks, no to be upholden by him; and besides it has gotten him such a name amongst the auld carles and carlines, that my uncle hears his praises as often as he hears his name. Ay, ay, if one wad hae praise in this warld they maun buy it,—though I'm sure the praise o' such clish-maclavering halligots is no worth the money that is paid for it. No one can ever say that I made such a fule bargain. It was but last night, no further gone, that I saw that wastefu' shameless support o' a' prodigality, Elspat Corbat, in the act of sending off a cart with two good bows of oatmeal to auld Donald Robbie, the herd that broke his arm in falling from a rock when he was going after stray ewes;—and, forsooth, she had her master's orders to do so. I wish it had choked her—and though there was heated meal in the house, she must needs

tak the best, and send it to a useless feckless body like him. It wad drive a reasonable woman mad, to see such lavishing on a' hands. If my uncle wad hae the folly to fling awa' his meal that gate, was it no a good opportunity to send what was fit for no other thing.

"He has spoilt the servants here, both in and out doors to such a degree, that fint a thing will they eat, but what might be put upon her Majesty's table in Lon'on. There is no use, however, in letting that heated meal, lie for the maggots, and the day after the morn, when Elspat goes to the weavers with the last spun wool, for the servant's bed, I'll just get Meg Donaldson to tak the meal to Drumduir, and sell it for what it will bring. Little is aye better than nothing, and every little maks a mickle, and if my uncle is to squander his fortune in thousands at a time, it is fair that *I*, who have come to his house to take care of him, and to look after him, should have a picking of what's going. I wonder if it's no more reasonable, and wise-

like, that *I*, his niece, should have some sma' benefit, than a' the broken householders, and wafe-bodies in the country—and he has no so much as made me the present of a new bonnet, ever since he came to this house."

Jamesina, in her anxiety to justify her own proceedings, had forgotten to enumerate, amongst her uncle's prodigalities, the handsome allowance he had settled upon her ever since her mother's death, when she hinted, in one of her letters, that her father's large family prevented him from giving her the means of showing all the respect to her dear mother's memory that her heart would prompt her to do. This little circumstance she was anxious to keep from the knowledge of her brothers, therefore had never mentioned it to a living creature, and had almost succeeded in forgetting it herself, except when the day of payment came round.

Thus reasoned Miss Jamesina, and thus settled, to her own satisfaction, her proceedings for the present.

CHAPTER X.

Land of my fathers! though no mangrove here,
O'er thy blue streams her flexile branches rear,
Nor scaly palm, her finger'd scions shoot,
Nor luscious guava, wave her yellow fruit,
Nor golden apples glimmer from the tree—
Land of dark heaths and mountains—Thou art free!

LEYDEN.

MISS JAMESINA SINCLAIR had many fluctuating thoughts upon the means to be used in forwarding her own views upon Kelpfield, without at the same time facilitating those which she took it for granted her friend Miss Robina Ross must have upon Fernbraes; but though the thing was very desirable, it was not very easy to effect. Her uncle could not endure Mr. Murdoch Ross, and he

took more pleasure in the society of his sister than in that of any other person in the country—in fact Miss Robina was the only neighbour always welcome.

Jamesina had tried most industriously to find out some agreeable male friends for her uncle, with whom he might occasionally ask Kelpfield to take a bachelor dinner; but her efforts had hitherto proved unsuccessful, and she found that if she might look for the pleasure of seeing Kelpfield an invited guest at her uncle's house, it could only be in the train of his sister.

Robina, though several years younger, had been the faithful friend of Mrs. Sinclair, and as such had an influence of habit over Jamesina, though the difference of their dispositions had prevented more confidential intercourse between them than arose out of their relative situations. At the time of Mrs. Sinclair's death, Robina had become acquainted with some family circumstances of which Jamesina would have been better pleased that she had remained in ignorance;

as it was the knowledge gave her an authority with Jamesina and increased their appearance of intimacy, without increasing their confidence. Jamesina was not the sort of person to share in the feelings of Robina, who therefore never spoke to her of what concerned herself, and Robina had what Jamesina considered such strange notions upon things in general, that she was the last person to be taken into her secrecy, or intrusted with her hopes and fears.

In truth the wily Jamesina was too wary to trust any one with her concerns, and without knowing it, acted in the full spirit of the generous maxim of the Duc de la Rochefocault, who directs the prudent "to treat every friend as if he were one day to become an enemy." Of this she was convinced, that no part of Robina's information would ever be imparted to her uncle, and though there were serious inconveniences attending her growing intimacy at Fernbraes, still Jamesina felt that if she would give her own projects a fair chance, she must run all

risks, and even suffer her uncle to have an inexhaustible store of anecdotes in praise of her brother Malcolm, from the lips of his earliest friend Miss Ross, who loved him with almost a mother's love, and who delighted to recount the exploits of "her darling boy," as she always called the young sailor.

"If she marries my uncle," thought Jamesina, "Fernbraes will surely be Malcolm's—that is to say if he lives to come back, which is not altogether certain; but seeing that things stand so, there is the greater necessity of my being fixed at Kelpfield, and if he thinks that his sister is likely to come here, it will, perhaps, be a help to me: for it is natural that he might expect her to speak a good word for her own brother's wife, and no for Malcolm."

Satisfied with this conclusion, which she had come to, in the course of her usual walk of morning inspection, Jamesina proposed to her uncle at breakfast, that as the day was fine, they should go over to Kelpfield, and ask the laird and his sister to dine

with them next day. "I have not seen Miss Robina since last Sunday at the kirk, and I dare say she will wonder what has become of us all."

"I am always glad to see her," answered the doctor, "but I cannot abide that brother of hers—how unlike he is to him I knew—I cannot sit a whole afternoon to drink port wine with him, and hear a history of his improvements."

"If ye will no drink port, ye know uncle, ye can drink claret; besides he's wanted to make up your hand at whist, and it wad be less than civil to ask his sister without him."

"Well, well, Jamesy, have it your own way since ye have set your fancy upon it It is as you say a fine morning, so you may order the horses."

"Wad it no be better to go in the carriage?" demanded Jamesina, "where ye sit more at your ease and admire the view from Ben Tarrach, that ye are so fond of."

"For that very reason I prefer being in

my saddle. I always rode at Lucknow when the sun would let me."

"But don't ye think taking the carriage would look better when it is to pay a visit?"

"In whose eyes, Jamesina? Do you think a sensible woman like Miss Robina ever thinks of such nonsense?"

"It is not her I am thinking about, she has never been out of the country, and cares nothing about the ways of the world; but her brother, who is far-travelled like yourself, kens very well how every thing should be."

"People travel, Jamesina, for very different purposes. Some learn by experience of mankind to value truth and sincerity more than empty show, while others go about to pick up their neighbours' faults and follies, and bring them home in addition to their own; and of this kind is the man we are speaking of. It was not enough that nature denied Murdoch Ross the least shadow of taste or feeling for beauty in one shape or another,

but he, to make her niggardliness plain to all the world, must set up for a connoisseur and a man of taste and fashion. It is not to please such as him that I will ever change an inch of my old ways; if such a creature could have any influence on my actions, it would only be to make me more fond of every thing that is different from him and his notions;—so if we are to go, Jamesy, let us have the horses."

The horses were accordingly brought, much to Miss Jamesina's dissatisfaction, who had fully proposed to herself the pleasure of paying this visit in a manner much more suited to the future heiress of Fernbraes; but she had tact enough to see that it was in vain to think of arguing the point with her uncle; though she could not help being provoked with the want of consideration which made him never use a handsome equipage but for the night, or bad weather. There was, however, no help for it, and Miss Jamesina was obliged to mount her black Highland pony and canter away

by the side of her uncle, who was engaged in conversation with Duncan about a sick old woman who lived at the foot of the avenue leading to Inchbraken, and whom he proposed to visit on his way.

It was a fine morning in the beginning of autumn; the heath-covered mountains shone purple in the rays of a cloudless sun, and the waters of the bay danced in light. "This is the scene I remember," said the doctor, as he stopped on ascending Ben Tarrach, to contemplate the view which opened out at his feet. "There rolls the sea, and there stand mine own mountains, the same as I used to wander over when a boy. Though the world and every thing in it changes, nature is always the same. These are the glorious and sublime features which impress Scotland on the hearts of her children, and make them, wander where they will, recall with feelings of filial delight the towering solitudes and fresh mountain atmosphere, which strings the nerves and animates the heart with feelings above the

ordinary intercourse of the deceitful, selfish, ambitious herd who struggle onwards in life's crowded roads."

Duncan saw that his master was happy, and with the tact of heart—the kindness of kindred feeling, he spoke of the exploits in which they had both taken part, and which were linked in agreeable remembrance with the scenes before them—the game they had killed on these hills, and the successful fishings they had enjoyed in that bay.

The doctor sat upright in his saddle, the scene of action was around him, and under his feet; and in retracing the olden time and seeing the gray rocks, behind whose covert he had often watched the deer, he felt his blood circulate with brisker flow, and his spirits glow with the warmth natural to an enthusiastic mind like his, which may be depressed and chilled, but can never be totally extinguished while the vital spark remains a tenant of its earthly clay.

If imagination be a source of suffering, and who that possesses it does not know how

it can aggravate and forerun the evils of life, it is also a source of unalloyed, though transient enjoyment, and the doctor was recalled from its evanescent dreams by the sight of a fantastic porter's lodge, and grotesquely-ornamented gate, as he turned down into the sweet little valley, where Inchbraken was sheltered (for he absolutely refused to recognise it by its more modern appellation).

The sight of these encroachments brought back to his mind the idea of Jamesina, whose presence he had absolutely forgotten in his more agreeable recollections; but this new odium which dispelled them, recalled her,—and looking over his shoulder, he saw her at a little distance, seemingly occupied in her own cogitations, which had been of a very different nature. The gate, however, dispersed them too, and brought back her uncle in place of Mr. Murdoch, who had been the chief object of her reflections; and when he stopped a moment, she rode up by his side to ask him if he did not think that

beautiful lodge was a great improvement. "And in putting it there too, he has got rid of a whole row of old thatched cottages, which he took down to make the road wide enough. There is no one of the squad left but auld Nelly Wilson, and she poor body is hidden behind the trees there, so that her bit housie does not offend the view of this bonny new erection."

The doctor was unused to contradict women, and his niece's folly appeared at this moment so glaring, that even if he had intended it, he felt that it would be useless; he therefore contented himself with saying, "I am going to see this Nelly Wilson, whose house he has had the grace to spare for such good reasons."

"Was there ever the like, seen or heard of?" thought Miss Jamesina, though she gave her thoughts no tongue. "We canna set a foot out o' our own doors, but he rins into every hole and bore in the whole parish; and then now, I'll warrant, he'll be sending meal and what not, to this auld carline,

whose name he never heard of till this blessed morning. If such things must be done, its Robina's business to do it, and I'll not stir a foot with my presence to encourage him in such waste. And wha kens too what ill diseases people may catch by going near all the sick folk in the country?"

Jamesina entered the gate, and Duncan, as he knew no evil could happen to her in the avenue followed his master, who soon found that the inward divinings, of which the poor creature complained, were occasioned by want of proper nourishment, as much as medicine. He resolved however to send her both.

He called to Jamesina, whom he believed to be in waiting at the door; but the lady had moved on. Telling Nelly Wilson that as soon as he got home he would send back Duncan with what would do her good, he followed his niece to Kelpfield, where he found her quietly seated on a pea-green silk couch in the drawing-room, listening with complacency and approbation to Mr. Ross's account of the improvements he had made,

and all he intended to make. He gave her an inventory of the partitions he had pulled down, the windows he had knocked out, and the doors he had knocked in, with the plastering, papering, painting, and gilding;—in short, as he observed, "it would have been easier to build two houses than to modernize one, as he had done."

When the doctor made his appearance, wholly occupied as was his custom with the business he had in hand, he no sooner despatched his compliments of entrance, than he told his niece that he must make their visit shorter than he had intended, for he must take her home to get some things for a poor patient.

Miss Ross interposed with, "Any thing you want, doctor, you can get in this house. I am half a doctor myself, and you can have, I dare say, whatever is necessary without loss of time."

"Uncle," said Miss Jamesina in a hesitating voice, for she was provoked to break up her agreeable conversation, for the want

of any creature upon the face of the earth, still more to supply them out of her own store. But there was no alternative if she would not let her friend Robina take an interest in her uncle's concerns which might be very inconvenient.

"Fernbraes," said Mr. Ross, who gave every one their titles on the principle of doing as he would be done by. "I have just been telling the young lady, your niece, Miss Sinclair, of all my improvements, and I wish to show her what I mean yet to do, and ask her opinion; for, without seeking to praise my own works, I think she has a very fine taste, and knows a great deal about such things."

"Certainly, brother," said Robina; "it is not every person in the country, that can look with eyes of admiration upon the changes you have made, and are making."

"It requires improvement by travel, or great natural taste, Robina, to judge of such things, and that you know does not fall to the lot of all the world," said Mr. Ross con-

ceitedly, and willing to reward Jamesina's approbation with compliments, at the expense of a sister who mortified him by disapproval of his thick-coming innovations.

To Jamesina it was irresistible, and at once determined her to let her uncle run all risks.

"I have, I dare say, what is wanted for the sick woman, in the big press, in the back parlour," said Robina, putting herself in motion.

"Your are right," answered the doctor; "it will be better to let her have some bark, and wine, without waiting until it could come from Fernbraes;" and following Miss Ross to the aforesaid press, he soon procured what was required for immediate use.

"Duncan," he called as he recrossed the stone lobby, or "hall of entrance," as Mr. Ross chose to denominate it, since he had furnished it with chairs, which bore his painted crest upon their backs. "Duncan, take this wine from Miss Ross to Nelly Wilson, and tell her to take a glass every

two hours, and I will send what else I spoke of, as soon as I get home."

"Is it poor old Nelly, that you are speaking of?" answered Robina. "If I had known that she had come back to her own house, for she has been away for some time to visit her daughter in another part of the country, I would have seen her myself, and taken care that she did not want for any thing."

"I dare say you would, I am sure of it," said the doctor with cordial good-nature, at the same time taking her hand with great kindness.

At the moment the drawing-room door opened, and out walked Miss Jamesina, followed by the laird. She stopped a moment in dismay, on observing her uncle and Robina. "Has it come to this already?" she thought.

Kelpfield offered his arm—his sister and the doctor went on with their own affairs, quite unconscious that any action of theirs could be interesting to others; and as Jame-

sina drew near, and heard the accents of their voices, she felt quite reassured. "It is nothing after all," she thought. "It is only his way; I dare say he just did the same with old Nelly Wilson, when he was bidding her to take care of herself, and take all the fine things he was to send her—little need to do that, I trow."

These vexatious thoughts were dispelled by the more agreeable voice of her conductor, pointing out to her attention every minute alteration in his house, and asking what she thought of them. "Don't you think, Miss Sinclair, that these verd antique pillars, with red cornelian capitals, give this hall a much more lively appearance, than the old lobby used to have shut in with a door? I have ordered a statue of the Venus of Medicis to be put on the top of the stove, and it is to be quite on a new construction, ornamented in a way that was never seen in this country before. Poor people! they are sadly behind in all that concerns

the fine arts—and I shall have an Eolian fiddle in the window. Don't you think that will be truly romantic?"

"Beautiful!" said Miss Jamesina. "But who is to play upon it?"

"The wind," answered her companion, with a smile at his own superior knowledge; "the wind will be the only performer."

"Then it must be one of the things they call Eolian-harps," answered the lady. "I thought ye spoke of a fiddle."

"It is all the same—quite the same thing, whether you call it harp or fiddle; but certainly the first is the prettiest name, and sounds the best in a lady's mouth, and I shall always call it so in future," answered the unabashed connoisseur.

Jamesina was more than happy, and the taste and politeness of Mr. Ross stood equally high in her estimation.

"If I could only get Robina to give up that back parlour, what a nice conservatory I could make of it!"

Jamesina was quite at a loss to under-

stand what he could mean; but, before a man of such vast information, she was careful of betraying her ignorance, and waited in hope of illumination.

"I would break out immense windows from top to bottom," he continued, "and fill it with all the rare foreign plants. You have no idea Miss Sinclair, of what fine flowers we have between the tropics. And I would make a very large glass window to look into it, just over the sideboard in the dining-room—and I would set up a beautiful statue of a shepherdess, or some such thing, painted to look quite natural, with a bird's-nest in her hand—and I would have a bird too, covered with the natural feathers to make it look more like the life, fastened upon one of the flower branches near her, as if it was just going to jump into its nest, and then there should be a glass fountain at the shepherdesses feet, filled with gold fishes, and a lamb to drink out of it. This should be placed in the middle of the flowers, and then I would have gilt cages with all

sorts of singing birds.—Oh, it would be sweetly pretty!"

"What a taste you have, Kelpfield! did ever mortal imagine the like! To have a view of such wonderful flowers, and hear the birds singing all the time you were eating your dinner. It could not have entered into any body's head but your own to contrive such a thing—and the statue too, in the midst of them! It is a wonder to me what my friend Robina can be made of, when she does not take delight in such things!"

"Nature has denied her your taste Miss Sinclair, and she won't learn of those who could teach her—there's the pity!"

"How happy they are that might have such teaching!" responded Jamesina. "To think on her preferring to keep that room choked up with presses and bottles full o' useless medicines for a' the idle folk in the country, is more than I can comprehend.

"It's a queer taste indeed, as you very justly observe, and brings all sorts of beggars and vagabonds about the house,

whose very sight is shocking to those who can take pleasure in pretty works of art. Poor Robina knows nothing of such pleasures," he continued, with a sentimental shake of the head. "Did you remark my new gate when you came? She pleaded hard with me to let the old one stand, and not take away the row of unsightly useless cottages that used to stand without it, enough to disgrace the approach to a gentleman's house."

"Ye did right, Kelpfield, not to be guided by her there; for, besides making one of the bonniest gates in the country, ye got rid of a wheen plaguy folk of no use in the world but to fill the kitchen, and eat you out of house and hall—I wish my uncle had but your good sense, and right way of seeing the world; but I doubt he is like my friend Robina, ower auld to learn, and ye will no tak ill, Kelpfield, ony thing he may say. Poor man he has no great taste for improvements, and likes better to glower on bare hills, and the lone sea-shore, than to see all

the beautiful things that ye hae done for this place. Indeed ye may well be proud o' it, for it is so changed for the better, that nobody could know it again."

"Not so much as it will be yet, I hope, before I have done with it. Let me have the pleasure just to indicate what I mean to do out of doors, for I have been so busy in the inside, that I have not had much time to think of any thing but the gate yet, and the rest is, I may safely say, in a state of nature, which you know is always frightful and revolting to men of taste—but that will not be the case long. It is unfortunate that the house stands in a valley—I cannot alter that—but I can open it up and cut down the old trees which block up the view, and get a glimpse of the high-road. I like to see what is doing in the living world."

The road which he wished to look upon was the road to Fernbraes, and Jamesina's imagination, though neither very active or very brilliant, where her own interest was not concerned, at once suggested that as the

cause, and disposed her to view every thing with favouring eyes.

"It will be a great improvement," she answered, "and give you, too, wood for the farm utensils. The trees are most of them come to their full growth—indeed the valley, as it shelters them from the sea-breeze, is very favourable to that, and it would be a pity to lose the use of so much good timber, to say nothing of the fine view ye will gain by it."

"Very true, Miss Sinclair, yours is a very considerate remark; not like my sister, who would not have a stick cut down, and has a sort of superstitious veneration for these old trees, because some old fool about the house has said, that

'When at Inchbraken, they cut the first pine,
'Twill pass from the male to the female line!'"

"That is indeed a reason that I didna ken," answered Jamesina.

"But if it was meant for a prophecy," said the laird, "I'll disappoint it, and yet have

my way. I'll cut the old oaks and the hard beeches, and even let the few pines stand as they are. Another whim of Robina's is to like better to walk on the damp grass and moss, than on my nice gravel avenue, when I have had it well rolled to break all the sea-shells in it. Nothing can be more pleasant, so open and airy; there is nothing to keep it from the sun, so that it is always dry and healthy."

"That's what I tell my uncle, when he is grumbling, as he does every day he goes out, about the old trees that my father cut down, which were good for nothing in the world, but to shelter corbies' nests, wastefu' beasts that they are, and keep the ground under them covered with useless weeds—ye'll no believe that though Fernbraes has been in the Indies like yourself, Kelpfield, he likes the commonest gowan that grows on the road-side better than a' the plants we have been speaking about. He never ceases lamenting about the exposure of Fernbraes—I wonder what he would be at

—well wad I be content wi' it if it were mine—not that I think it such a pretty place as ye are making this Kelpfield."

"You are too good, you are too good, Miss Jamesina, to say so; but I have not shown you, yet, all that I mean to do—walk this way if you please, and I'll show you an improvement which I have set my heart upon, and which I must take the opportunity of doing when Robina goes to spend some weeks with our friends in the North."

CHAPTER XI.

Mais ces ruines même ont pour moi des attraits,
Là, si mon cœur nourrit quelques profonds regrets,
Si quelque souvenir vient rouvrir ma blessure,
J'aime à mèler mon deuil au deuil de la nature.
De ces bois desséchés, de ces rameaux flétris,
Seul errant, je me plais à fouler les débris.

DELILLE.

THEY walked up a shady winding path, which brought them to a flat, green, semicircular spot, at the foot of a rocky bank, richly clothed with natural wood; round the circular side of the quiet retreat ran the clear rivulet which watered the valley, and on the most projecting point, under the shade of some fine trees, stood the family burying-

place, enclosed by a stone balustrade, ornamented with rustic sculpture.

A more tranquil or retired spot could not have been found in the universe; the repose which reigned around seemed as profound as that of the dreamless inhabitants who slept within its enclosure. The ivy and the bramble stretched their long rambling sprays from the balustrade round which they twined, to the tall trees which drooped over them, and sheltered myriads of birds, the only living creatures who loved to frequent the lonely place. There they, at all times, dwelt in security, protected by the dead—sportsmen and schoolboys alike shunning the spot;—even the cowherd and the shepherd drove their respective charges further up the glen, unwilling to become ocular witnesses of the strange sights which had in former days been seen there. Every one in that part of the country recollected the wailing sounds which had been heard from out the old enclosure, before the fatal news arrived of the murder of the last heir, and the dead-lights which

had always come over the hill from the east, and fallen into the family burying-ground at Inchbraken.

"Now," said Kelpfield, when he and his companion had emerged from the shady walk so as to have a full view of the sequestered spot just described, "was there ever such a proof of want of taste as to put that dismal place there. When I have opened up the view it would be almost in sight of my very drawing-room windows—a cheerful prospect indeed to look upon; but in the olden times I think people had no idea of the elegance and refinements of life; but I shall clear it all away—every stone of it; and with the building materials make an elegant summer-house, painted white. It will stand just in the middle of the green, and give a fine termination to the vista from my new bow-window, and besides it will be a nice place to drink a cup of tea in, or to smoke a cigar, or any other reasonable enjoyment."

"As you say, indeed, that will be a great deal more comfortable," replied the

acquiescing Jamesina, "and a much more pleasant sight near a gentleman's house, than this old place, which only brings black thoughts into a body's head—time enough to think of it when one cannot help it—such sights always make me dull, though I am no given to melancholy. And besides, the summer-house, which as ye say will be another like sort of a thing, I'm thinking ye'll hae stones enough to make a nice little snug place for the poultry. The geese and ducks wad thrive bonny on that green by the burn—Oh! it's a pleasant sight to see the young ducklings tak to the water, and on such a spot as this they wad na need half the feeding they require for ordinar."

"A most excellent thought, Miss Sinclair, I will look amongst my plans of ornamental buildings for a nice pretty thing for the purpose. Men of the first taste, now, take poultry-houses into their pleasure-grounds, and I'll have one here more fit to be looked at than my sister Robina's in the farm-yard."

"It wad be as well perhaps to leave the

fools where they are in the farm-yard," observed the economical Jamesina, "they are aye picking ye ken aboot the barn-doors; but for the water birds, the web-futted race, they would be out o' sight better here."

"It is indeed a pleasure, Miss Sinclair, to talk with you about my plans—you enter into them with so much taste. This improvement I never yet have had courage to mention to my sister, because I know that she will be sure to oppose it, for it is one of her fancies to like it, dismal as it is, better than any nook on my estate. From her youth to the present day she has spent hours here every day."

"And very unprofitably spent, I think they were. If she had the young geese to look after or even the white webs to bleach on yon bonny green, I wad think something o' it; but to come amongst thorns, brambles, and branches, to disturb the rest of them that's no thinking of her, is a thing I wad never think myself answerable to do—and is just another reason why such kind of places

should be kept to the kirk-yard, where they are no in the way o' being troubled."

Jamesina was delighted with the confidential turn of this conversation. Mr. Ross had complained of the dissimilarity of taste between himself and the manager of his domestic concerns:—"Perhaps," she thought, "he may like to have one more to his own mind"—and by his own account herself was the only one who had entered into all his views, praised all he had done, and applauded all that was yet in project. She was not so sure, that if she was actually mistress of the place, she would approve of the expenditure of so much money; but it would be time enough to think of that when her own interests were more nearly concerned. At present the most prudent and the most agreeable part was to praise and admire, and she expressed her approbation in every form she could find, while the laird gallantly assured her, that "he never had so much pleasure in showing his improvements to any one, as to a lady of her taste."

Miss Jamesina answered with a broad

grin, which showed her large, white, strongly-set teeth, "They wad hae very little taste, indeed, that wad no admire what ye hae done, and are to do. I dinna pretend to great taste or skill in these matters, seeing that I hae never been out of the country, but I can say that I hae never seen ony thing in it to equal the Venus, and the gold fishes, and the shepherdess, let alone the summer-house, when it comes to be in the place of that old tomb. Indeed it is surprising to me that any body with their eyes open, can see the place without being struck with the changes."

"I am struck with the changes, for one," said the doctor, who, with Miss Ross, stood at the front of the house, to which the other two were advancing, and who had caught the last words. "I hate changes, and I find every thing changed here, and here abouts. The very character of the people is changed; and I meet with nobody like what I used to remember, but you, Miss Robina."

"I am glad, Fernbraes," she answered,

with her own quiet, good-humoured smile, "that you find in me still a remnant of the good old fashions of the Highlands. The Lowland ways are coming so fast upon us, that if our forefathers could look up out of their graves, they would neither know their own houses, or their own children. We send the girls to the boarding-school, and the boys to college, away from the friends that could either control or direct them; and what do we get back, but heads turned with conceit and self-importance; vain of knowing how to wear fashions that are dead where they took their birth, before they can come to us; and the senseless accomplishments of shaping a few useless things in card-paper? And lairds who cut down the trees that their fathers had planted, drive their tenants, and herrie the country."

"There may be too much truth in what ye say," answered the doctor,—"not that I am an enemy to reasonable improvements, and travel either; but I like to see the difference preserved, that there used to be,

between a Highland gentleman's family and all the little folk of the towns. Our respectability, Miss Robina, depends more upon true hearts than new liveries, and honourable actions than new fashions."

"Yes," she answered, "what need have we, who, like Naomi of old, dwell amongst our own people, of all the vain distinctions of furniture and dress, which are indispensable to those whom nobody knows any thing about."

"It is not such things as ye say, Miss Robina, that will make a gentleman or a lady,—or speaking English either," said the doctor, with a glance of something like scorn on Kelpfield's doubtful pretensions. "It is the sentiments, more than the language; and the man, not his clothes."

"But, uncle, you who have travelled so much and lived in the world," interposed Miss Jamesina, willing to conciliate all parties, "ye are no averse, I am sure, to learning and improvement."

"No, certainly," echoed Kelpfield, "Fern-

braes, as you justly observe, Miss Sinclair, has mixed too much with polite society not to like improvements."

"If ye mean by improvement, Jamesy," answered the doctor, replying to the first speaker, "seeing foreign lands, and studying human nature in all its different forms and workings, I agree with you; but if you mean going abroad to bring home foreign fooleries, not to say vices, and learning to treat with contempt what our forefathers respected, and living in the world only for our own pleasure and our own interest, I despise it."

Jamesina prudently resolved to take no further part in an altercation, where she could not please one party without offending the other, and she hastened to stop it by observing, "But in the beauties of this walk we are forgetting that we came here to ask the pleasure of your company, Miss Robina, and yours, Kelpfield, to take a family dinner with us to-morrow."

The invitation was accepted, and Jame-

sina took an opportunity when the other two were engaged, to say in an under tone to her attendant, "I would have asked a party to meet you, sir, but ye see my uncle's ways, and men must no be contradicted."

"I wish I could say that every one was treated with so much consideration," answered her companion; "but one would think my sister had a pleasure in breaking me in to bear it."

Duncan's appearance with the horses interrupted, or rather stifled in its birth, the flattering observation which Miss Jamesina was prepared to make. Kelpfield lifted her to her saddle, after she had shaken hands with his sister, and given her a hundred charges not to be late, and just to bring her night-things with her, for there was always plenty of room at Fernbraes—an invitation which was seconded by the doctor, and for her sake extended even to her obnoxious brother.

The doctor rode down the avenue only looking back to wave his hand to his friend

Robina, who still stood looking after him on the spot where he had left her, and whose kind and generous heart rejoiced to see such a worthy scion of his father's house returned at last to do it honour.

"If my friend Marion could have seen the day!" she thought. "But though that may not be, her son Malcolm may yet be here, to rejoice his worthy uncle's heart."

CHAPTER XII.

The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse to be divorced;—every other wound we seek to heal—every other affliction to forget; but this wound we consider it a duty to keep open. The love which survives the tomb, is one of the noblest attributes of the soul.

ALISON.

MINDFUL of her promises, Miss Robina accompanied by her brother, made her appearance the next day at Fernbraes, an hour before dinner, in time, as the doctor told her, to visit the poor specimen which he had given the world of his taste in improving—"though I could wish," he said, "that the trees which I ordered to be planted around it were sufficiently grown

to shelter it from all the ill tongues in the country, which have taken the liberty to call it, 'The Laird's Folly.'"

Miss Jamesina, for reasons best known to herself, declined making one of the party, but offered to show Mr. Ross "about the doors," as that would not derange her unusually careful toilet. She had decked her short stout figure in a thin muslin dress, which, having been made several years before, had no superfluous fulness to correspond with the increasing dimensions of the wearer—the body, and sleeves tight to the well-fitted arms, were garnished with narrow black lace in sundry fantastic festoons, and the short waist was surrounded by a scarlet morocco belt, which was fastened by a steel buckle. The dress shorter behind than in front, just permitted the toes of a pair of yellow boots to be visible beneath it, though behind it had the advantage of displaying the heels and quarters. Her stiff, wiry, dusty black hair, was partly curled, and partly frizzled into a form which it would

be difficult to describe,—suffice it to say,that the breadth of the head was considerably greater than the length, and that it was bound with a fillet of orange velvet, confined in front by an ancient paste ornament.

It was the first time her uncle had seen her so *recherchée* in her attire, and though little accustomed to take notice of dress, he could not help being struck by the absurdity of her general appearance, and therefore as well pleased when she declined exhibiting it more fully in the proposed walk.

Kelpfield to an apple-green coat, added bright buckskins, top-boots, and a scarlet plush waistcoat, which permitted a magnificent broach to display its unusual dimensions. A gold chain round his neck, from which depended his opera-glass, and an enormous bunch of seals, hooked upon his waistcoat-button, completed what he and Miss Jamesina considered a very gentlemanly appearance, and one which the doc-

tor thought well fitted to escort the yellow boots of the lady of his choice.

Robina, though suitably and reasonably attired herself in dark poplin, was accustomed to the unwonted modes of those whose intermitting fits of personal decoration subjected them to the ridicule of associating articles of different centuries, and saw her friend Jamesina without noticing her ill-assorted ornamental efforts.

Miss Jamesina, unwilling to derange the elegance of her headdress by a bonnet, unfolded a little old blue parasol, which Kelpfield gallantly carried over her head, as, leaning on his arm, she proceeded to show him the room there was at Fernbraes for the exercise of an elegant taste like his. "If my uncle could only be brought to take example by you, what a place he might make this!"

"Yes," answered Kelpfield, "it has some capabilities. Certainly, any thing done in the ornamental way on the face of that hill,

would be well seen from the high-road by the sea. What would you think of an equestrian statue of Fernbraes, as a hunter, taking the Deer's Leap, as it is called, from the face of the gray craig. The world of fashion are as fond of having their statues now, as they used to be of having their pictures; and for my part I think it is a better thing, because they can be placed in more conspicuous situations, and seen by the whole country."

"Very true, very true, indeed, Kelpfield; but a statue would cost so much money, and one would have so little for it, if it was to be an old thin man like my uncle. Besides, I have an interest in saving expense that will not bring any thing in again—at his years he cannot live for ever."

Jamesina thought it prudent just to give this hint; but that it might appear to be casual, she continued, "When we go in, I'll show ye the house. It's really a shame that he should take the very best room in it

for his books; but my great-grandfather had something of the same craze before him."

Meantime the doctor had gained the mosque with Miss Robina, and given her a history of his motives for placing it in that situation. She could enter into the feelings which had actuated him, and the disappointments he had experienced, for her own path in life had been early darkened; and though time had brought resignation, it had not blotted from her memory the hopes which she once cherished. She felt for the friend with whom she was now talking almost the affection of a sister, and it was returned with an equal portion of brotherly love. Was not James M'Alpin the earliest friend of her beloved brother, Kenneth? Was he not also the brother of her own chosen friend, Marion, and the uncle of Malcolm, to whom she had transferred his mother's place in her heart; and in addition to all these claims, had he not the senti-

ments and the feelings, the generous warmth of heart which Robina was accustomed to think characteristics of a true Highlander?

In her youth she had loved and been beloved, but her Roderick was a younger son —"a poor single-souled lad," as her friends told her, whose fortune hung upon his sword —such as it was she would gladly have shared it with him, but her parents were inexorable, and not even the persuasions of the man she loved could induce her rectitude of mind to swerve, and consent to a private union, when his regiment was ordered to Gibraltar, and he was forced to join, and leave her exposed to the attentions of one whose fortune he knew would render him more agreeable to her parents.

"No, Roderick, no," she said, "cease, to seek to turn me from my duty—I will never break through what I owe to my father and mother, and bring shame on their old age. I could not look for a blessing, even as your wife, if I gained the name by being a disobedient daughter. No earthly power will

ever make me deceive my parents—I dare not be guilty of such a sin, I could not do it even for you, but of this you may rest assured, if I am not yours I shall never be another's."

"Then you are mine, Robina, and in token I put on this ring with my hair until I have the right to give you another."

"And I shall keep it, Roderick, until that day, or it shall go to the grave with me; and in exchange I give you mine."

Roderick accepted the offered gift, and called God to witness that it should never quit the hand where she had placed it while life beat in his heart, "And if I fall, Robina, it shall be returned to you if I have a friend near me at the time."

Roderick departed and fought with honour to himself and his country, and Robina, foul day and fair, walked to the grotto on the beach, which had witnessed their parting. Months passed and years rolled away, and other and richer suitors came, and her parents pressed her to be reasonable, but she always returned the same answer, "I refused him

rather than disobey you, but more I cannot do—if I am not the wife of Roderick, I will never be the wife of another."

At last came the news of a great battle fought and victory won; but the first name in the list of the slain was Captain Roderick M'Kenzie, and poor Robina heard no more. That night she was saved from the misery of beholding the illuminations which the great victory had caused. When the first shock had passed, her grief became calm, for it was deep; and though it was neither indolent nor absorbing, it was lasting. Hers was not the headstrong violence of passion, which overleaps all obstacles for its own gratification; but the steady and true love, which can live in distance and absence, and even can survive death. She had loved him for his own sake, because he realized all that ever she had imagined of amiable or excellent in human character—Roderick M'Kenzie and Robina Ross had grown up together—he was the first and only object of her young heart's affection, and in the purity and

loyalty of that affection, the idea of transferring the place he held in her heart to another seemed to her as sacrilegious, as forsaking the religion in which she was born.

"I will never cut off my first faith," she replied to her mother, when she pressed her to marry another. "I will never bind myself to duties which I cannot perform, and make it a sin for myself to think of him who only thought of me."

"But to see you provided for, to see you settled, my dear Robina, before I quit this world, would make my flitting easy."

"No, mother, no—never let us look that good should come by evil means—I cannot take the Lord to witness a lie, and come what may I know that he will never forsake us if we do not leave him. It is more sweet to me to be at liberty to think of my own Roderick (which I dared not do, if I plighted my troth to another), than to gain all the honours and riches that a perjured oath could bring me."

Robina had not been bred in the school

of selfish egotism, which considers all affections as injurious which do not advance worldly prosperity; and her mother, though she earnestly wished to see her placed above a brother's caprice, on whom, in case of her father's death, she must become dependant, like the generality of unmarried women in her country, was still too much of a Highlander not to feel a sort of triumph, even while it defeated her wishes, in the resolution of her daughter.

Bred in solitude with the object of her early choice, and accustomed with him to wander amongst the simple and grand features of nature, Robina's feelings acquired strength and depth—they had not been divided and fritted away amongst a multitude of exciting causes, and were therefore concentrated in a few dear objects. Nature she looked upon with the eye of a mountaineer, instinctively alive to the grand and sublime, —with a deep feeling of boundless delight, which carries the mind forward to contemplate truth and beauty at the footstool of the

Eternal. The wild and plaintive airs of her native land were familiar to her ear;—the sentiments of constancy and tenderness which these songs contained, familiar to her heart as the legends of superstition to her imagination.

When the campaign was ended and peace proclaimed, a friend of poor Roderick's returned, and according to promise restored to Robina the ring which contained her hair, and which, by his own desire, had been taken from the hand of her lover when his gallant heart had ceased to beat. "He breathed his last in my arms," said his friend, as he discharged his commission, "and a truer heart or a braver man never left Scotland (which is saying not a little)."

It was not surprising, then, that in such circumstances, she maintained her unchanged resolution, and that when years had, one after another, taken away the remaining objects of her earthly attachment, she should bestow upon the young Malcolm Sinclair the love which she had

felt, for his mother,—or that, by the free-masonry which attracts similar minds, she should feel an interest in his uncle which the length of their acquaintance did not warrant; for at the time of her first intimacy with his sister, he was absent pursuing his professional studies, and when he did return to the country before his departure, she was gone on a visit to other relatives; but independently of personal acquaintance there were ties enough to unite them, and as the true steel, as soon as it strikes upon the flint, elicits the spark, characters of truth and sensibility respond to each other.

"I can believe, doctor," she said, "that you must have felt more sorrow than joy in returning here; what can make one spot of earth dearer to us than another, but those who enjoyed it with us? and when we find that they are gone, and their places filled with creatures of another mould, the whole scene becomes hateful. What can be more painful than to find a family likeness in the features of a relative we have loved

and lost, and at the same time to observe that those features express feelings that are widely different? Oh! it convinces us that the outward show and form may remain, but that the heart, the spirit, the soul, which was our life, and our sun, has left us in night. But when my Malcolm returns, doctor, you will at last have one of your family like those who are gone."

"Would that the day were come!" answered the doctor; "but his profession is hazardous, and his return uncertain, like all our hopes in this land of pilgrimage. But can you tell me, Miss Robina, what has become of my old nurse, Madge M'Lean, that I do not find her here? some mystery hangs over that. Duncan, though naturally open as the day, is averse to speak of the reason of her disappearance; and I have not been able to get more satisfaction from him, than that, some years ago, she went to see an old widow sister in a distant part of the country and never came back; nor did her sister ever see her I think, though what

happened to interrupt the meeting no one knows. However, I see plainly that there is more in it than any one chooses to tell me."

"At the time old Madge went away," replied Robina, "I happened to be from home; but after your grandfather's and sister's death, I do not think that she found the place just what it used to be, and that I fancy made her, as her son says, go to see her sister. She had to cross two or three arms of the sea, and perhaps the boat was lost."

"That is not unlikely; but still," said the doctor, "I cannot find a satisfactory reason why Duncan says so little about it. I have spoken to Jamesina, but she says she was with her sister at Long Byars when Madge left this place."

This conversation was interrupted by the announcement of dinner.

"Cussim Ali has exceeded himself in this curry," said Dr. M'Alpin; "let me send you the dish, Mr. Ross, it is a good thing in itself, and an excellent relish for

London particular. We are inconsistent creatures, Miss Robina; many a time at Lucknow I have wished for salmon and deer ham; now I am in the midst of them, I even take to the curry again."

"Those who have staid too long away, doctor, must not expect to find the tastes of their youth just where they left them. I can well believe that living in foreign lands makes all things seem different, and yet we do not need to travel to find changes. Every thing here has changed under my eyes as well as yours, though I have staid in the same spot, or as the Vicar of Wakefield says of all his migrations being from the blue bed to the brown, mine have been from this county to the next, while yours have been to the ends of the earth, and yet I have lost as many dear to me as you have done, without perhaps having made as many friends to replace them, and I have seen old families decay, and upstarts come in their place." The good lady used an expression which in Scotland is too generally applied to all new comers, whatever may be

their merit. "I have seen others laid in the kirk-yard, I have seen old houses new faced, and old trees rooted out, and, goodness be about us! no further gone than this morning, I heard a project to take down an old family burying-ground to build a new hen-house."

"That would be worse than the barbarism of the Goths and Vandals!" returned the doctor, unconscious that it had reference to the *beaux desseins* of any one present,—"it is too much for the ignorance and egotism of even our modern improvers."

Robina felt the mistake she had been guilty of, in drawing out such an opinion in her brother's hearing; and Jamesina, fearful that in her presence Kelpfield would feel himself called upon to defend his taste, hastened to observe to him in an under tone, while her uncle and Miss Ross were talking together, "You see that things here are exactly as I told you; do not blame me if there is not much done at Fernbraes. He has not the least feeling of how things

should be; but there is no use speaking to him about it, for he is too old to learn. Nature or education have not done for him what they have done for you, Kelpfield; but a time *may* come," she spoke lower, "when those who can profit by your lessons may have more power here, and in the meanwhile it is wise to keep a calm sugh!"

Kelpfield was of her opinion; the probability of her being her uncle's heiress had still greater weight in his eyes than the acquiescing spirit and charming taste which approved of all his projects, realized or in vision. One of them now was actually to ascertain what ground there was for such an expectation, before he committed himself by making a proposal, when he neither dreaded delay or cruelty, and he therefore suppressed his feelings of mortified vanity upon the doctor's blunt declaration, in conformity with his intention to take the first opportunity of sounding Fernbraes upon such an important subject.

After dinner, when the ladies had retired,

Kelpfield, in pursuance of his design, observed, "I had no idea until I saw it to-day that this was such a fine place. Why do you not marry, Fernbraes, and provide an heir in the right line."

"I might ask you the same question," answered the doctor, "but whether I marry or not, Fernbraes will not want an heir."

"Your sister's family you mean—but that is the female line—Hugh Sinclair has a good prospect."

"Who spoke of him?" asked the doctor, with an accent which made it quite clear that he would never be the chosen. "But what needs," he added smiling, without the least suspicion of the motive which prompted the observation, "turn a man's thoughts to his heirs, when he has but just come to his inheritance?"

"It is a duty," said Kelpfield with an air of importance, "that those in your situation and mine, representatives of ancient families, should think of those who

are to succeed them—they owe it to their country."

"Never fear, we are not such rare patriots but we may have as good successors—my conscience is clear on that score."

"Then you have done more than I have, if you have already settled that matter," answered Kelpfield, still hoping to bring him to the desired point.

"Certainly, a man who has free property and a choice of heirs, would be mad to leave it to be made over by chance to the heir-at-law.

"Very right, very right," observed Kelpfield.

"Those of whose regard we have experience—those who consult our interest and our pleasure in every thing, have a right to be preferred—and they shall be preferred," said the doctor, thinking of his Malcolm.

"Very proper, indeed," responded Kelpfield, thinking of Jamesina, to whom, during

the rest of the evening, he paid such flattering attention, that no doubt remained in her mind of the full success of all her manœuvres, or in her uncle's, of his thus comfortably getting rid of one who could never be an agreeable member of his family.

"If Kelpfield would but take her," he thought, "and Malcolm return, I shall yet see good days under my own roof."

CHAPTER XIII.

Il faut, je le vois bien,
Etre homme de parti, chez vous, ou n'être rien;
* * *
Mais ma neutralité me rendit leur victime:
De l'un à l'autre bord chacun m'en fit un crime,
Tira sur moi; n'importe!

BERT ET LEROY.

THE party at Fernbraes had finished breakfast, and Kelpfield, assiduous in the prosecution of his intention, had fixed a day for the return of the visit, when a travelling postchaise drove up to the door, and Dr. M'Alpin had the pleasure to find it contained an old Indian friend, Mrs. Sea-

ton,—the meeting was pleasant to both parties.

"You will be surprised to see me here, my good friend," she said, as he gave her his hand to alight, "I heard at the next town that you were within a few miles of me, and could not think of passing your door."

"Yes, Mrs. Seaton, a good deal surprised, but more pleased. I did not even know that you were in Scotland."

"Oh, I have been for some time trying to find a resting-place to suit me without much success. You are, however, more fortunate."

"After you have spent a few days amongst us," answered Dr. M'Alpin, "which I hope you will do, you shall judge for yourself."

"Willingly, my dear doctor, I shall be glad to see if your world in the country is the same as ours in town."

"Are you alone, quite alone?" he asked.

"Yes, only my maid with me. I am on

my way to visit an old grandmother in the north."

The doctor presented Kelpfield and Miss Ross to his new guest, and easily persuaded them to relinquish their intention of returning home on that day, on condition, however, that Mrs. Seaton would accompany them on the next to Kelpfield.

"If I am to judge by what you have said, Mrs. Seaton," said the doctor, "you have not yet fixed your head-quarters."

"No, M'Alpin, it is not an easy matter; one meets with so many things to discourage and vex one;—though I was warned, in some part, of what I had to expect before I tried. My natural temper is averse to the mystery, concealment, and pretensions which are called very respectable; and I often, without thinking of it, just say the truth, and tell people that I cannot afford to do such and such things, instead of assigning a thousand reasons of choice which have no existence whatever. I hate, you know, the

whole of that system of telling needless falsehoods, which, after you have incurred the sin and the shame of them, do not deceive a single creature;—and perhaps, too, I may have fallen into the mistake of thinking that my friends who knew me should value me a little, independently of my income; but that is a mistake I would warn every one to avoid. Whatever you are, whatever you do, never depend upon consideration in their eyes, unless you make a figure in that of others."

"You know, doctor," she continued, "that in our part of the globe we do not attempt to impose upon the world, or raise ourselves by the little ostentatious contrivances which I find here to be the machinery of life; but it is all wheel within wheel, and I can assure you that a person whose life has been passed at a distance makes but sad bungling work of it. My friends,—that is to say, my relations—are "*very genteel*," though some of them being younger branches of good families, are not very rich, consequently

have the utmost dread and abhorrence of contact with limited means, or any thing which looks like it, and acknowledge no relatives, who do not live in such and such houses, in such and such parts of the town. When I arrived, in my ignorance, I wished to take a small house, suitable to my income;—you know I have no one to live for but myself, and by so doing, hoped to be able to see my friends at dinner as usual; but I was told, "If you take that sort of house, nobody will go near you—nobody ever goes to that end of the town,—nobody lives there—fix yourself with the rest of the world if you would not live *en hermite*." I was forced to consent notwithstanding the disadvantage of a northerly exposure.

"After inquiring into the rents, and finding them beyond what I intended to give, I wished to content myself with a flat (or floor as it is called in England), as sufficiently large for my accommodation—here again I was opposed. "Flats were exclusively the habitations of old annuitants,

and there were none of my friends who would like to be seen coming out of a '*common stair*,' to avoid which odium I was forced into a '*self-contained house*,' much larger that a single person required, and demanding more servants than I had intended. I was consoled, however, with the assurance that this establishment would "place me quite in another situation." In furnishing I had the same difficulties again to go over—'every body's rooms are on the same plan—the couches of the same form and in the same places—in short there is a certain sort of arrangement, which no one can do without, and there are proper people to whom every one applies,'—so I had all these things to submit to.

"Installed in my house, I found that my income was not quite so large as my accommodation, though still sufficient to give me the comforts of life on my sober plan, and, as I imagined, the pleasure of friendly intercourse:—no such thing—when I proposed to ask six friends to dinner, I was told,

"that at that season of the year, such a thing was never heard of—nobody, that had any other engagement, would come to see me in that way. If I expected to see my friends, I must fix on a day at a reasonable distance, and ask a party to meet them.

"In order to put me into the way of doing things properly, I commenced by accepting some of the invitations sent, and dined at the houses of people whose fortune I knew was not much beyond my own, in the style I should have found amongst persons possessed of six times their income. This was a mystery to me; but when the matter was explained I found it included so much trouble and management that I was frightened, and resolved to try the evening parties.

"'You will find that much more economical,' said my adviser, 'than your plan of giving dinners—give one large party, and go over them all at once—afterwards you can accept every invitation, and have no expense but your chair-hire.'

"But what am I to do for society? in-

quired I. I had no sooner asked the question than I felt how useless it was. 'Society?' answered my cousin, 'I do not know what you mean by society—I was never in want of society—one meets society every where.' I felt at that moment the difference between my cousin and myself; she was firmly rooted in her native soil, and made an integral part of her own society,—I, like a loose weed, floated on its surface, unconnected with all around me; their feelings, their views, their interests, or even their recollections, had nothing in common with mine."

"There it is," answered the doctor, "when we have advanced a certain distance in our journey through life, so much of our enjoyment lies in memory, that we find our intercourse barren with those who can take no part with us in bygone recollections."

"We return strangers," said Mrs. Seaton, "to those of our own house, even if they exist, but more frequently amongst those who are grown up since our departure; we have new characters, and new places to

make for ourselves, and that too often under the unfavourable circumstances of broken spirits and wasted health, which are two things your friends never make allowance for, and which only gain you the credit of being a low-spirited helpless creature, and the very conviction that it is so increases the evil. You cannot have felt that, M'Alpin, in the way I have done, however every one experiences it sufficiently to make him recognise the truth of the assertion."

"Certainly, Mrs. Seaton, more or less it applies to us all—we have been long expatriated, our place in the web of human society has been filled up, and we, like a part of the woof left out by the weavers, cannot be easily interwoven again; habits of kindly intercourse have been broken, and low as the idea may seem, habits of the kind are not easily replaced, and if we are devoid of the striking advantages which are at first sight recognised by all the world, we are left to struggle for ourselves; we see the world with our eyes open, and possibly

the unimpaired and bright recollections of youth deepen the contrast."

"You have not yet tried a town, doctor; when you do you will find the difficulty of choosing the society you like—all run in parties, who have a thorough aversion and contempt for each other, and your acquaintance with such and such people, will invariably exclude you from intimacy with such and such others, who may be to you equally desirable. If you seek instruction as well as amusement, nothing is more hopeless than the society of the generality of literary men, who, by a species of usury, are often intent on putting their talents and their observations out to interest, and who will rarely, unless you have a name in the world, waste a good remark upon you. The votaries of art take the same liberty to consider the 'nameless,' and the swinish multitude of one cast, and every different sectarian, considers those of different profession as heretic and reprobate.

"Another difficulty is our ignorance of the

nice and exact management by which contrary connexions are kept up; the mysteries of those who are asked, when the door is shut to others, to take a cup of tea—of those who are asked to a 'family dinner' when no stranger is present—those who make unseen visits in private apartments out of visiting hours—the poor and odd members who are asked on stated occasions of family reunion, 'because you know they are people, that one cannot bring amongst strangers, but when it is only ourselves, every body knows them'—the honoured guests who are produced on occasions of parade, when the whole house and establishment is new modelled to receive them. You know that every family have certain relatives who are always inquired for by all your friends very particularly in company. The lady of the house makes it a point to ask you when you heard from your sister, Lady J., your brother, the admiral—your nephew, the judge—and your niece, Mrs. Lofty of Castle Air;—and if you should be very intimate,

she takes an opportunity when nobody is within hearing to ask in a whisper, how poor Robert, or Nathaniel is? for in almost all families there is some *ne'er-do-weel*, who has not advanced his fortune sufficiently to entitle him to have his existence inquired after in the hearing of all the world.

"Now this is the history of my own grievances, but I can give you those of my friend Mrs. Beaumont, which are quite of a different cast. You remember her a Calcutta beauty, holding crowded levees, and being continually surrounded by troops of friends and humble servants; well, she and her husband came home, purchased a splendid house in your capital, and expected to walk in their old path—but Mrs. Beaumont soon found that it would not do. With the exception of a very few, all the men were professional, and had other things to do than to attend levees, and make morning visits, and the favoured few were so caressed and spoilt, that they were more in the habit of re-

quiring attention than paying it, and her house was filled from morning to night with elderly ladies whose profession it is to pay visits and show attention to strangers; so she soon wearied of such society, and betook herself to London, though at the risk of being let down into the general mass."

"And what do you mean to do, my good friend?" demanded the doctor, "since your first trial has been so unsuccessful."

"Visit the members of my family whom I have not yet seen—stay with them if there is any thing to like in them, and if not, endeavour amongst strangers to choose something more to my own taste. If I had children I should have an interest and an occupation at home, which would render me not so independent—as it is, *I* am not a first object to any body, and there is no one a first object to me. However much people may talk of independence, there is, believe me, no one who likes the perfect degree of it, which leaves us at liberty to

stroll over the world, to come into it, or go out of it just as we choose; because no one cares any thing at all about the matter."

Mrs. Seaton, according to promise, spent three days at Kelpfield, to the great satisfaction of her host, and his friend Miss Robina, who was charmed with the frankness of her character, while Jamesina, on the contrary, thought she had never met with a more disagreeable inmate, and often "wondered" to Kelpfield what her uncle could see in that out-spoken woman to like so much; for her part she liked "douce sensible ladies much better"—and she *wondered* that any reasonable woman (which, by the by, was a title she could not in conscience bestow upon Mrs. Seaton) was not ashamed to be running the world her lieful-lane in quest of what she called society.

"I am quite of your opinion, Miss Sinclair," answered her acquiescent auditor, "and if it were not that it gives us the pleasure of your company at Kelpfield, I cannot say I would have much enjoyment

in her visit; for you may see by her way of talking to Fernbraes about uncultivated nature, that she has no pretensions to taste."

Mr. Ross's anticipations were more than verified: Mrs. Seaton could hardly suppress the sarcasms which she told the doctor came unbidden to the tip of her tongue when Kelpfield "in all the pomp of ignorant conceit" showed her what he had done, and what he meant to do.

"I admire greatly your consideration," she said, "in putting your Venus on the top of the stove; it is a good place for her in such a climate, and she will sometimes, too, have the loan of the cloaks and coats of those who go out and in through the hall. It looks classic, Miss Sinclair, does it not, to adorn one's house with such figures?"

"More classic than comely," answered Miss Robina; "and as you and I, Mrs. Seaton, are of old-fashioned tastes, I will, if you please, show you what I call my improvements in this place."

"And I will show Miss Sinclair what has

been done since she was last here," said her brother, offering his arm to the lady of the yellow boots.

The other three strolled through the shrubbery on the burn side, until they crossed a little bridge which brought them to a rustic seat, screened by a mass of rocks and tall trees, commanding a full view of the ancient and romantic burying-ground. Here they sat and spent the time in quiet conversation until dinner was announced. At night Mrs. Seaton and Miss Ross parted with mutual regret, and promises on the part of the former, who was to leave Fernbraes next morning, to return that way when she had paid her proposed visit.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ah! mercy on my soul! What is that?
My old friend's ghost!

MOLIERE.

How like a fawning publican he looks!

SHAKSPEARE.

"Vow Sirs! and is na my mither come hame?" said Duncan M'Lean to old Elspa Corbat, the housekeeper, as his master crossed the lobby, without being observed by the speaker.

"What is that ye say, Duncan?" demanded the doctor as he caught the intelligence which the housekeeper had opened her mouth to receive. "Did I hear right? did ye say that your mother was come back?"

"Saving your honour's presence, I said, sure enough, that my own old mither is come to light this very blessed morning."

"Where has she been, Duncan? what has keepit her so long awa?" earnestly asked Elspa.

"I canna say—I dinna ken; she wadna answer me that question, but she said after she had seen the laird she wad tell us a' aboot it."

"It's a queer thing, and an unco though, that she should be spirited awa in a whisk, as one may say, and at the end of seven years return in the same way without mortal's kenning how she went or how she came," said the old woman.

"Where is she? why is she not here?" inquired Fernbraes.

"She is at my good brother's, Kenny M'Cra, at the Red Sheugh; he brought her hame in his boat, and she is now no able to walk as she used to do, so that she was fain to go till her bed, there to rest her after all

that she has come through, before that she could see our maister."

"Order them to saddle my horse, Duncan. I'll see her before another hour has gone by, and know the meaning of all this."

"That's like yoursel, Fernbraes," said old Elspa as she stood looking after her master. "When was it ever said that a M'Alpin forgot a follower, or slighted a friend? If there is no glamour in this, there is perhaps something that will please some people just as little to be spoken about. I mind well, that a' thing was na just as it should hae been after the auld laird's death here; and it was after the lady's burial at Stoneyards that they said there were awsome things seen and heard there; though I did na think so much of it at that time as I hae done sin' syne that auld Madge was missing. There were them there that didna hesitate to say, that she was in compact with him that shouldna be named, but a' that will come to light noo, and perhaps more too,—but is that

you, Miss Jamesy? ye come so softly a hirt a body, that it is enough to gar a body start at such a time too."

"If it was in the dark or the twilight, ye might say so, Elspa: but at this hour in the morning, it is surely no a time to jump as if ye had seen a ghaist."

"I dinna ken, Miss Jamesy, whether the creature that is come, is in the body or out of it—Did ye hear that auld Madge M'Lean is come back, or else her wraith?"

"Old Madge M'Lean did ye say! Have ye seen her, have ye spoken with her?"

"No; but Fernbraes has just gone to the Red Sheugh, where she is at this present."

"Well, well," said Jamesina, dismissing the appearance of interest which the first intelligence seemed to produce, "I am glad to hear that she is in the land of the living, for it will please my uncle; but it was of another thing that I came here to speak with you. I want you to send the herd over the hill to Stoneyards, for the turkey-pouts that Barbara has brought up for us—give him a big

basket to take them in, and I'll give him a bit of a note to Barbara, or my father; for I think that this is the day that she was going to Long Byars."

The housekeeper went to the servants' hall, where the herd was eating his porridge, and warned him to be in readiness for the proposed embassy, which she joined in her own mind with the news of the morning; while Jamesina retired to her own apartment to pen the following note:

"Dear Father,

"As Barbara is going, if I remember right to Long Byars, I write to you for the eleven young turkey-pouts she reared for us here, and which you will know by a rag of scarlet round their feet—please tie their feet before their travel, that they may not do mischief the one to the other. There is nothing Fernbraes likes better than a white fat turkey-pout, if it be a well-fed bird for the spit. We have no grouse in the house; if ye are provided, it would be as well to send us some; for my uncle, who is

gone out to the Red Sheugh, to see his old nurse Madge M'Lean, who they tell me is come back this morning, will, I warrant, bring back a good appetite with him, and I fancy the old creature, before night.

"Dear Father, I remain,

"Your loving and dutiful daughter,

"JAMESINA SINCLAIR."

The Highland pony, the big basket, and the herd were despatched forthwith, with particular injunctions to make no delay by the road, and to give the note into Stoneyards's own hands, that there might be no mistake about the turkeys.

"If Stoneyards is on the hill, as is his ordinaar," said the boy, willing to show his capability for such a trust, "I shall give your letter to the young laird, who can read all the same."

"Ye will do no such thing, ye conceited widdy-fu, ye'll just seek out my father, wherever he is, and give it into his own hands, and dinna forget the grouse, do ye hear? Fern-

braes will hae a fine appetite, Elspa, when he comes back frae the sea."

With a thousand injunctions to go by the letter of his instructions, the herd-boy was dismissed.

Elspa hastened to spread the marvellous news she had just heard, and to hear what every body would say about it. Jamesina retreated to the poultry-yard, her usual place of meditation, to consider what effect this unlooked for arrival was likely to produce, and what line of conduct was best for her to pursue. She soon settled it all to her own satisfaction, for she recollected with pleasure that her conduct had been always so circumspect as not to compromise her with others, even if there were disagreeable discoveries to be made; but she counted much upon old Madge's fidelity to her mother's family, and affection for the child she had nursed, which she was persuaded would make her suffer all in quiet, and make her forego the wish of vengeance, even if she had met with wrong, rather than wound him by bringing blame on those connected with him.

And Jamesina was right in her conjecture, for when the old woman sat up in her bed to see Fernbraes, whom her son rode on to tell her was coming, and when she took her dear bairn, as she called him in her arms, and solemnly blessed him, and returned thanks that she had lived to see the day when he was come back to lay her old head in the grave, she resisted his wish to know what had caused her absence and her extraordinary silence.

"I am too happy this blessed day," she said, "to speak of suffering when I should give my whole heart in gratitude to Him who has given me to see the desire of my heart, and to hear a voice that I thought would never again have sounded in my ears on this side of time. Let me see you, my bairn—let me see the features I have so often looked upon, and that I see now with pleasure as I ever did—though, wae's me, they are saire changed."

"And you are changed too, my poor Madge, since those days; but tell me what

made you leave the country, and I will not ask you another question, till you are well enough, and strong enough, which you will soon be at Fernbraes, under Elspa Corbat's and your son's care;—what took you away?"

"Just to try to better my fortune, after your dear sister's death."

"But was not what I sent for you every year enough?"

"His name be praised!" exclaimed the old woman, "I am more happy at this moment that ye didna forget me, than if I had a' the wealth of the Indies, though with my dying breath I could make oath that I never heard ye had sent aught to me, till this moment."

"I must see to this," said the doctor, in rising wrath. "And ye were in want, Madge," he said kindly, "and ye thought that the child ye had nursed, had forgotten you in his prosperity?"

"No, no, Fernbraes, I kenned you better—I am here sitting that never evened ye to an ill thought, far less an ill deed; and whatever

may have been my trials, and I have had my share, I always said to Duncan, and Duncan to me, 'if my own dear bairn was here, it's no him that wad see this.'" But seeing that he knit his brows, she went on—"Ye mauna think that any one has ill used me—I canna complain, only ye ken old age and infirmities will come."

"I'll know the bottom of this, Madge, before I sleep—in the mean time try and rest and refresh yourself, that you may be able to come to Fernbraes in the afternoon. I'll send for you as soon as I get home, so be ready—and we'll try if we cannot make up for all that is come and gone."

The doctor fully convinced that there was some iniquitous mystery concerning old Madge, turned his horse's head across the hill to Stoneyards, as the readiest way of solving what had hitherto baffled all his attempts. He knew that it would be useless to question the prudent Jamesina, of whose tact at keeping things quiet, and putting a smooth face upon them he was fully aware.

He knew she was one who could rub down and plaster up as occasion required; consequently that she was not a person whose sedulously-arranged statements were at all times in exact conformity with the real state of things. Wary as she was, she thought there was no use in making others acquainted with the true state of any matter, unless their assistance was required, and even then not further than was absolutely indispensable.

Of her father, then, he was resolved to demand an account, which he now thought he had delayed too long, from the aversion he had for disagreeable altercation, and the fear that if he commenced inquiries with his brother-in-law, he should find but too many subjects.

As he drew near Stoneyards every thing had an appearance of neglect and decay; the stone dykes were in many places broken down, and these "slaps" were filled up with cut "whins," to keep out the sheep, who left notes of their wanderings in the form of

tufts of wool, on the stunted and barked trees, which straggled irregularly on both sides of the cart-road that led to the house. The present proprietor had always been too much engrossed in making money to think of comfort or decency, or in short any thing except what he always called "the main object."

The house was what is called in the north of Scotland, "a single house;" that is to say, having but one room in depth, with "thorough lights;" to the centre were joined "back jams," or wings forming part of an irregular figure which took in the farm buildings. The house was "harled," and consequently at some former period had been white; now, it was as black as winter snows and summer rains could make it, and the slates originally gray, had changed their hue to yellow, from the moss and lichen with which they were covered.

Dr. M'Alpin entered through a gate, standing most hospitably open, over which were carved the initials of the builders, and

the date of the erection, which went back to 1690. On each side of the gate were two long flat stones, on which beggars used to sit until they were served, and which also were in requisition as "louping-on stanes," for those who were not sufficiently *au fait* in equestrian exercises to dispense with such assistance.

Through this gate he crossed the stone-paved court, overgrown with grass and long nettles, the house-door, by a mistake not uncommon in a country where such entrances should be guarded against more than in any other, opened to the east, and to remedy the blunder it was garnished with a stone porch having a more kindly entrance to the south; but though it was possible to turn the door, it was impossible to alter the house, the front of which stood in deep sunless obscurity. When the doctor presented himself (having first tied his horse to the outer gate, as there was no living creature to hold him), he walked straight forward through the open house-door, into the open parlour, knocker

or bell he found none, until he reached the chimney, and twitched the cord there depending, with such force as quickly " brought ben," a fat, bare-headed, bare-footed Highland lass, in a blue worsted gown, and blue and white striped worsted apron, to ask without waiting for an order,

" Is it my maister that ye are seeking, sir ?"

" Yes; I want your master—tell him that I am here."

" Wadna it be better sir, if ye please, just to go tell him ?—it's no that far awa—he is only o'er the croft."

" Ye are right," answered the doctor, whose impatience was willing to take the shortest way—" but where is the croft ?"

" Will I show ye, sir ?" she answered, running up through a narrow, dark passage, and opening another door at the end of it facing the porch, and contrived as if it was necessary to ensure the draft of air always in circulation.

" Take care of your feet, sir," said the bare-

footed maiden, splashing onwards without looking behind, and disturbing a flock of ducks and ducklings who were gobbling and swimming in the receptacle for potato-skins and vegetable-water, which constant use had hollowed at the back door. "Just step on the straw from the stable—that will no wat ye, sir. Whish! whish! whish!" and she spread her apron to chase the ducklings out of her path. "Ye'll come through the barn sir, that's the short road, and drier too, for there's aye a loch at the end of our byre."

She entered at the one door of the said barn, and emerged at the other while she was speaking, the doctor following as fast as the unstable nature of his footing would permit.

"And now ye'll cross the moor and gang up the how, and in the lang craft at the head of it, ye'll be sure to find Stoneyards with the butcher that came this very morning frae the borough town to buy sheep—ye canna miss the road"—so saying, she dropped her

best courtesy, wished his honour good day, and returned by the way she came, again scaring her webbed family, as she reached the precincts of her own dominion.

The doctor, as soon as he found himself on firm footing, turned round to look at the house and its dependencies, which was not, strictly speaking, the property of the present occupant, though he held it for a sum so very small that it could be scarcely called a rent, upon one of the liberal and comprehensive leases, which were in olden time granted by those who regarded the number of their vassals more than their rent-rolls, "as long as wood grows, and water runs." Feudal superiority was thus preserved, and as it was customary in that country to bestow titles on more slender pretensions, Mr. Sinclair's right to be called "Stoneyards," was never disputed.

And while Fernbraes was gazing upon the wrong side of this dwelling, with all its appendages of ducks and dubs, its owner saved him the trouble of a longer walk, and as-

cended the how from the long croft, in earnest conversation with the butcher.

"Ye'll no find better or fatter in the hale country, John," were the first words that reached the doctor's ear.

"That may be—that may be, Stoneyards; but ye hae been o'er hard upon me—they are too dear, I'll never make my own of them."

"Hoot awa, never tell me the like o' that. I'll see that's no true when ye come back to the long croft for the other twa score that ye had better tak noo, before the south-country drover gets them—but Fernbraes, is that you? Good day, John—Here ye find me aye doing something—aye looking after the siller."

"And I am come to look after mine," said the doctor, "and to know what has become of the twenty pounds I have remitted every year since my grandfather's death on behalf of my old nurse Madge M'Lean."

Stoneyards's countenance underwent a

change, which put to flight the good-humour his successful bargain with the butcher had left there, and he answered in a disobliging tone. "I have more to do than to tak note of such things. Your letters, ye ken, were always to my wife. I know nothing of the matter."

The doctor stood quietly listening to this speech, and looking full in the face of the speaker,—a sort of attention which seemed extremely irksome to the object of it, who turned half round as if nothing more was to be said on the subject. "Some of my letters were addressed to your——" he had almost said unfortunate, but he checked himself, and went on, "wife, but it is not her signature I find in my banker's account for the receipt of these half-yearly sums when they were drawn out of his hands—answer me that."

"Hoot awa! I ken something about it noo that ye speak o' that," he answered with undaunted effrontery.

"And perhaps you'll mind what you did with the money too," said the doctor in a tone of sovereign contempt—"since the poor creature never got it."

"And who told ye that?" demanded the other quickly.

"Herself—not an hour past."

"It's true that I kenned auld Madge M'Lean too well," resumed Stoneyards, "to gie her the keeping of so much siller; but I did better—for your sister herself bought every thing she could want, and gied it to her."

"Ye do well," answered the doctor, sternly, "to put my sister in between you and me at this moment, and for her sake I will refrain my just wrath, and not tell you what I think of breaking trust and defrauding the poor; but I will tell you this, and you may make what use of it you like;—if it were not out of respect to her memory, these would be the last words that I would exchange with you; as it is I will see you as *her* husband, and the father of *her* children—but

nothing more—so now you know my mind, and may act accordingly."

"Hoot awa—hoot awa," said Stoneyards, quite mistaking the cause of his brother-in-law's forbearance, "what needs ye mak such a rumpus aboot a wee bit slip of the memory, and tak an auld fule wife's word before mine? I tell you, your sister wha is dead and gone, gave her every thing she wanted, and more than she deserved—though, may be, she has told you another tale."

The doctor's usually pale colour flushed to crimson, as he looked with scorn upon the speaker: "Is it indeed a countryman of my own that I see and hear?—Could any Bengallee do more?—I can hardly believe the evidence of my own senses; but he is beneath my notice."

The doctor walked on while Stoneyards raised his voice to call after him, "Will ye no walk in, Fernbraes, and tak a glass of something after your ride. I wish I had known that ye were coming, and I wad hae been in the way to meet you, without the

trouble of your coming out here to seek me;" but receiving no answer, he muttered to himself—"Oh! oh! my gentleman has taen the black dog on his back, but the only way is no to see it. A wilful man maun hae his way—he'll come out of the doots the way he went in—it winna do to quarrel wi' our bread and butter: I must just gie him time to come to himself before we meet, though I thought I had taken care of that auld witch, and that she should na ha comed back here to travail us. He is such a fool with lavishing his money, that if some of it did not come this way it wad na be worth while looking after him, or being plagued with his tantrums; but we must try and put this strum out of his noddle, though how it is to be done at this moment, I dinna well see; but he'll just rin the length of his tether, and when he is weary he'll just come back again. His sister can still help me in that."

While Stoneyards was soliloquizing, Fernbraes was walking down to the outer gate at a quicker pace than he had used for many

a year; and when he came there, untied his fasting steed from the rail to which he had fastened him, mounted, and set forth at a brisk trot, impatient to quit a place filled with such painful suggestions. What must his poor sister have suffered with such a man? the sight of him and his family explained many things in her letters, or rather omissions, which were before unintelligible.

When he reached his own house he overtook Jamesina in the avenue, returning from the gate to which she had convoyed Kelpfield, who had that morning paid her a long visit, with which it was evident she was greatly delighted.

"What a pity that you did not come home sooner, uncle! one has been here waiting for you for the last two hours, until he could wait no longer, though he was grieved to go without seeing you," said Jamesina, looking down with a very demure air, which was, however, lost upon the doctor.

"Another time will do as well, Jamesina,

for all he could have to say. I dare say it was Rob Robieson with something about the quarry, or a new lease."

"What are ye thinking of, uncle? It was Kelpfield who was here, and who wanted to see you on very particular business."

"Kelpfield was it? Then it was as well that I was out of the way—he could have little to say that I would care to hear."

"I am very much obliged to you indeed, Fernbraes, for your kindness to *me*," answered Jamesina, in a voice of pique.

"Kindness to you, Jamesina! What have Kelpfield's visits to me to do with kindness to you? unless, indeed," he said, observing, for the first time, the droll and flurried expression of the happy maiden, "he was come to make a proposal for you."

"As broken a ship has come to land, uncle, and I dont see why you should think it such an unlikely thing. He is not the first, I trow, that has thought of me."

"Well, well, Jamesina, I am happy to

hear it, and if I had known he was here upon such an errand, I would have tried to meet him—but the loss of a day is not the loss of a cause. In the meantime order a good cart full of straw and blankets to be sent up to the Red Skeugh without delay for poor old Madge, and let them take care that they send a careful steady man to drive it."

"It is surprising to me, uncle," said Jamesina, quite out of patience with his misplaced anxiety, "that at such a time ye should only think of an old witch like that; but if ye are so much taken up about her and like to go back that way, I dare say ye will overtake Kelpfield before ye come to the Red Skeugh."

"And ye would have me ride after him, and offer you to him, would ye, Jamesina?" said the doctor, much provoked by the way she had spoken of Madge, "No, no, let him go home in hope, and go you and see that every thing is well looked to for the comfort of this ill-used creature."

Jamesina turned from her uncle at the house-door in obedience, though not very gracious obedience to his orders. "Duncan," he called, "send Duncan M'Lean here;" but Duncan was not within hearing, and on inquiry it was found that the herd-boy who brought the turkeys from Stoneyards in the morning, had brought a message for Duncan which made him cross the hill directly to receive the payment of some money that was due to him by a man who was leaving the country; his master was provoked that he should be absent at a time when he was so much wanted, and the day was too far advanced to permit of detaining the cart until he could return from such a distance.

CHAPTER XV.

Take care my gates be open. Bid all welcome:
All who rejoice with me to-day are friends.
Let each indulge his genius, each be glad,
Jocund and free, and swell the feast with mirth.
The sprightly bowl shall cheerfully go round;
None shall be grave or too severely wise;
Losses and disappointments, cares and poverty,
In wine shall be forgotten all.

OTWAY.

THE evening had now closed in, the cart had been despatched several hours, and the doctor and Miss Jamesina were sitting on each side of a blazing fire in the drawing-room expecting its return, and both restored to some degree of tranquillity by the instrumentality of the dinner they had just

finished. The doctor forgot the provocations of her father in the agreeable prospect of getting so well rid of Jamesina, and she, in the certainty of her new establishment, lost the fears which had haunted her imagination on the first tidings that a person who was half a witch, if not one altogether, was to be a member of the family. Jamesina had her own reasons for not liking to have any one gifted with the faculty of divination under the same roof with her, and if even old Madge's talents did not extend so far, there were some things in her memory perhaps, which might be equally inconvenient to have brought to the knowledge of the laird.

While both were enjoying their speculations in their own way, Cussim Ali entered with the letters brought by the Fernbraes post-boy from the borough town. "Here's news! here's news indeed!" said the doctor, when he had, as was his custom, looked over his ship letters first. "Your brother Malcolm writes me, that he hopes to

be with us in two months from the date of this letter, and from the time it has been in coming we may look for him soon now. Send up Mrs. Corbat," he said to Cussim, who still stood behind his master's chair with folded hands. "We will make this a night of rejoicing: Jamesina, are ye not happy to hear that your brother will so soon be here?"

"I would be happy, uncle," said Jamesina, dissembling in a hypocritical tone of concern, the vexation which almost overpowered her, "if I did not know that he has the seas to cross, and that is enough to keep me sober. Wad it not be better, uncle, not to make any rejoicing until he is safe here? It's like tempting Providence, to begin merry-making, and him on the deep sea."

Her uncle, offended with the want of conformity between her sentiments and his own, at the moment turned to give his orders to the housekeeper who had just entered, with-

out even hearing the conclusion of his niece's speech.

"Your young master will be here soon, Elspa," he said.

Jamesina felt sick at the sound, and groaned over the cross fate that had prevented her uncle from seeing Kelpfield before such news was public. "Oh, if he had only seen him, and the proposal had been made. Kelpfield dared not have come back, come what would he would never have ventured to affront a family like ours; but now,"—she groaned louder—"there is no saying what may take place if this unlucky news reach his ears before he sees my uncle."

"Malcolm M'Alpin will be here before a month be past," continued the doctor, whose indignation at Stoneyard's behaviour seemed to decide him in proclaiming his heir. "Give every one that ye can gather together to-night, Elspa, the best supper that this house will afford, and let them drink to

the safe and speedy return of the heir of Fernbraes."

"Bless your honour for the word, and his name be praised who has brought back such a flourishing branch from the old root."

"Send for the piper, Elspa, and give them a merry night. I will lead off the first dance myself," said the doctor, "with the bonniest lass in the company, and may we soon have a mistress to grace the mansion. What would you think of a mistress, Elspa?"

"I wad think much of any mistress that you or Mr. Malcolm would give me," answered the old housekeeper, "and I hope yet to cook the wedding-dinner before I take my long sleep."

"Do not let us talk of sleep now, Elspa, but up and be doing. Send out the herds and call in the neighbours round to rejoice with us. It's a pity that Inchbraken is so far, for who should rejoice this night if Robina Ross did not?"

"It is too far! it is impossible that she can come at this hour of the night, uncle," eagerly interrupted Jamesina, in consternation at the idea of her disinterested lover being brought to witness such a fête.

"And why not, Jamesy? the night is fine and clear starlight. If you were to go in the carriage I am sure she, and if you like," he said smiling, "her brother would come back with you, and Elspa will have their rooms in readiness."

"It is out of all character to pay visits at this hour, and after what passed to-day, I would not like to do it," said Jamesina, with an air of rigid decorum.

"I was more ready to forget this than you, Jamesy," said her uncle, laughing, "however women have good memories in some things. He'll surely be back at a good hour to-morrow morning, and then we can engage him to come back to dinner with his sister. A family dinner, you know, Jamesina."

She smiled at the agreeable suggestion,

but took the opportunity at the same time to observe, "It is like he may come, and it would be as well not to say any thing about Malcolm or this letter until he has told you why he wanted to see you to-day; it will be more polite you know, uncle."

"Certainly, certainly. But what can keep the cart with Madge; no one will rejoice more in this news than she will do. We want company in our happiness. I wish that my friend Cheapstow and his wife were here to-night; they would be happy to see our young sailor."

Jamesina left the room on pretence of forwarding her uncle's wishes, but in fact to collect her scattered thoughts, and to consider how she could avert the disclosure, which she had a strong presentiment would blight her hopes, though vanity made one or two efforts against her better judgment to persuade her that her own lovely qualities and good taste were not altogether indifferent to her hero. The prospect of realizing all her wishes, and the chance of their

defeat, caused a commotion in the thoughts of our distressed damsel which had nearly driven her out of her wits.

The luxury and improvements at Kelpfield—fowl-houses, Venuses, and all—with the laird in his green coat, floated in succession before her bewildered imagination. To lose them—to lose them all—by an old man's perverse absence, just at the time he should have been present, was more than she could bear. She called to mind all the gallant, all the tender, things Mr. Murdoch had that very morning addressed to her; but though they were full of the warmest professions, she could not help recollecting, with a shiver, that there was not a proposal amongst them. He had made it clear, without committing himself by a formal declaration, that such was the intention with which he intended to wait upon her uncle; but she could not help dreading that the present change of circumstances might make a change in his amiable intentions, and she, for the first time in her life, gave way to a

tincture of the romantic almost for ten minutes, in persuading herself that it was the man she regretted, and not his fortune; and she, if ever she had indulged herself in the folly of a confidante, would at that moment have exclaimed against the cruelty and faithlessness of men, who gained hearts, "and leave those hearts to break." "Mrs. Ross, of Kelpfield!" the sound was music in her ears. Then she turned with black despair to the frightful reverse—her brother, the acknowledged heir, bringing home a young wife to take precedence of her, a poor neglected, rejected maiden! And the recreant Murdoch—it was not to be thought of—she would make every effort first.

Peals of laughter, which almost distracted her, with the idea that they would be heard at Kelpfield, sounded about the house and within it, as the tenants and neighbours came pouring in. The doctor, who loved old customs, had ordered that a great bonfire, the ancient sign of family rejoicing at Fernbraes, should be lighted on the face of

the Deer's Leap, to warn every one within sight of it, that their presence would be welcome in the servants' hall.

Jamesina's agony amounted to despair when she saw the bright vollies of flame shoot up from this conspicuous spot; and saw the figures of all the idle boys in the place dancing round it and feeding the fire.

"It will be seen at Kelpfield! It will be seen at Kelpfield and all is over! Oh! that they were in the midst of it that planned such a folly! it's no enough that there is laughing and gaffing sufficient to be heard round the hale country, and to start the deer from the heather, but as if that was too little they have made a blaze that may be seen at John O'Groat's house. Sorrow take them that I should say the like! See till that fire! Oh! that the winds would scatter it, or the rain drown it!—but no—it only blazes brighter. My blessing on Kelpfield's improvements! at this moment I recollect that in the room where he and Robina sit when they are by themselves, he

has built up the window that looked this way, to make a nitch, and if I could but get in that rabble of idle callants, it would be easy to get out the fire—for there are no many eyes here that will see much before they quit the house this night."

To send a trusty messenger to the hill, to entice the joyous fraternity who fed the fire into the muckle-barn, where punch and strong beer were set a-flowing, was the first care of Jamesina, and to smooth her ruffled features the second, as it would not do for her to make her appearance in her present perturbed state before all the sharp eyes in the house. She had a feeling that watchful regards would be bestowed upon her, to see how she took the information, and to enjoy her vexation—but here her dissimulation might have done credit to a wider sphere than it had ever been her lot to act in. After the first moment of surprise had passed, it would have been difficult to trace in her falsified tones and smiles, any indication of what was passing within.

Jamesina descended to the scene of action and met her uncle on the stairs coming to seek her.

"It is surprising that poor old Madge is not come yet—who did you send with the cart, Jamesy?" he inquired.

"Jock Glass—and he would be gleg enough to be back if he had an inkling of what is going on."

"And for what did ye send him, who is one of the idlest lads about the place? You should have sent one more to be depended upon."

"But how could I, uncle? Duncan, who is the most proper person, took it into his wise head to go over the hill to Stoneyards, the only day that it mattered two pins' points, whether he was in the house or out of it—the grieve, ye ken, was away with two or three of the farm lads with black-cattle to the Dolour market—the house servants are no fit to guide carts. Your black crature, Cussim Ali, if he were good for any thing else in the world but to sleep and to eat,

weary on him, wad hae frightened the folk at the Red Sleugh. Ye ken, uncle, that there are some who believe that auld Madge kens more than the rest of the world, and has friends that would no do to be seen in daylight; if yon black face had presented itself amongst them in the gloaming, there are some I doubt who would hae gotten an unco fright," said Jamesina, laughing at her own invention.

"I wonder, Jamesina, that you can have pleasure in such nonsense. Madge would know little, certainly, if she did not know more than those who can believe such tales —but I wish that she was come though, it is now late—I cannot understand what keeps her. That lad Jock Glass cannot have stopped by the way with any one he may have met on the road?"

"It's like enough—Jock likes a dram and a crack—though as I said before, he wad hae been here afore noo if he had kenned what was doing—but an hour or two more or less canna make much differen

she'll be the surest good in your aught you may depend upon it."

"Stop, Jamesina, stop a moment," said the doctor, listening, "I think I heard a cart upon the road, that will surely be them; but it is not coming to the house, it is going to the square. That's curious, too, at this hour of the night. Jock Glass must have got a cup too much, and forgot that he has got old Madge in the cart."

The doctor rang the bell, and desired Duncan, who at the moment presented himself, to go and see why they were taking his old mother to the square. In a few minutes an unusual commotion amongst the servants below warned them that something was amiss.

"The poor old creature is not dead, I trust," said the doctor, "something has happened, it is plain."

While he was speaking, Duncan returned to tell his master, that the cart had come back empty, without a driver, and that the horse was wet and covered with sand as if he had been in the sea.

CHAPTER XVI.

Night, sable goddess! from her ebon throne
In rayless majesty now stretches forth
Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumbering world.

YOUNG.

—— But hark!

* * * * * *

They come with half-lit tapers in their hands
And snatched in startled haste unbelted brands.

BYRON.

"I'LL wager any thing," said Miss Jamesina, who was very much pleased with an incident which she was certain would turn every body's attention from the bonfire to old Madge; "I'll wager any thing ye like uncle, that Jock Glass went into the 'wisp

house' at the bridge end with some of the market-folk, and that the horse strayed down on the sand, and now he is come home when he likes himself. A' the men about this town are so accustomed to eat and to drink, that fint another thing do they mind."

"But he is as wat and as weary, mem, as if he had travelled mony a mile," said Duncan, who had listened to the lady's exposition; "I wish all may be well with my poor mother."

"If this matter, as we have reason to think, should be as my niece has said," answered his master, "it is likely that Madge is as much surprised why she has not been sent for, as we are why she has not come. It is too late now to think of sending for her to-night, but ye had better step up Duncan, and tell her what has happened, as she will be, perhaps, ill at ease without hearing from us."

One of the servants from the square now made his appearance with a checked hand-

kerchief in his hand, which he said had been found fastened upon one of the cleeks of the coup.

"It is my mither's napkin," said Duncan, "I know that napkin well, I could swear to that."

"What do you say, Duncan?" interrupted the doctor. "Is it not possible that the poor old woman could have been thrown out of the cart?"

"My heart misgives me," said her son, "and with your honour's leave I'll go and see."

"Do that Duncan, don't lose a moment;" and speaking to the other servants who came crowding up stairs in the idea that something extraordinary had happened,— "Get ready the carriage, I will go myself, this instant, and see what is the matter. She is, perhaps, thrown out over some bank: give me blankets in the carriage."

"Ye are no surely, uncle, going to put the like of her into the carriage to soil it!" said Jamesina; "let me send Ronald M'Ken-

zie with another cart and plenty of straw in it, or a good caff bed if ye like, if any thing has happened, she will no be in a condition to put into a carriage."

"Out upon you, Jamesina," said her uncle, angrily, "to have such thoughts at such a time. Bring the carriage directly, and my horse, and let two or three men with lanterns attend me."

"But, uncle, are ye really going at this time of the night?—ye'll certainly take cold, for the wind is rising; and ye'll no surely take all the men, and leave me in the house my lone?"

But her uncle heeded not the expostulation, and had gained the foot of the stairs before it was finished. Seeing his contempt she went on:—

"And all this for that useless auld creature—I wish she may have broken her neck, and then all plague would be ended; but it's no to the like of her such turns come to pass. This is, I doubt, but one of her old cantrips, she never had the reputation of

being over canny. Hear to the wind how it sounds ; there's may be some one riding it the night—Fernbraes is so camsterie and capernoited when he taks the gee, that he'll no hear reason. A bonny like thing to leave me without a manbody in the house, when it's plain, queer things are doing out of it.—O Elspa!" she said to the housekeeper who came up stairs, "Did ye hear that skreigh—what's that, Elspa?"

"It's more than I can tell, Miss Jamesina ; I never saw nor heard waur myself, though I fear there's more in this than should be told."

Fernbraes rode straight to the cottage of his poor old nurse, impatient to ascertain if she had actually left it. Duncan, who had run every step of the road upon the same errand, had arrived a minute before, and from him his master learnt with sincere sorrow that the poor creature had actually set out.

"And is it possible that she is no arrived at this hour of the night?" inquired Kenny M'Cra's wife. "She left this wi' good day-

light, and Jock Glass was as sober as a judge, and said a drop had not passed his craig this blessed day, forby the glass I gied him at the door; but it's like that if he gaed awa with some of the market-folk, our mither, kenning his ways, has just taken refuge with some neighbour, and we'll hear of her in the morning, Duncan, never fear."

There was hope in the supposition, but neither Duncan nor his master were quite satisfied to rest upon it. "Let us, at all events," said the latter, "separate and make a thorough search along the road to be certain that no accident has happened, before we return."

Poor Duncan willingly acquiesced in the proposal, though he had little expectations from the result. From the moment he had seen the handkerchief which he knew to be hers, he had his own fears that violence had been used to prevent the return of his mother. This was a surmise, however, he would not even hint to his master without stronger proofs to go upon.

Part of the road from Fernbraes to the Red Sleugh lay along a steep bank overhanging the sea, and the natural conjecture in such circumstances was, that if Jock Glass had met with convivial friends and had left the horse to his own guidance, he might in picking by the road-side have lost his footing and fallen over the bank into the water, which would account for his wet appearance at his own stable-door. It was near ebb tide, and Fernbraes with three or four of his people, and such torches as they had been able to muster in their haste, determined to remain below the rocks and endeavour to ascertain if their conjecture was well founded, while the others should return by the road they came, and examine every suspicious spot on either side.

The doctor proceeded slowly at the head of his troop, who, as well as the doubtful light would permit, scrutinized the sand at the foot of the rocks, and below the bank, without discovering any traces of what they sought. It was now the season of low tides;

and it was evident, from the appearance of the high-water mark, that the last flow had not reached to within fifty yards of the rocks; so that if a horse and cart, or any body of considerable weight, had fallen over, it was clear that some traces must have remained. Every cavern and hollow along the shore was explored with no better success, and Fernbraes's hopes were strengthened that Madge M'Cra would prove right in her prediction, though the sandy and wet appearance of the cart and horse bore something against it.

Some of the people who had kept the main road had discovered Jock Glass lying on a bank by the road-side, in a state of complete intoxication. After they had, by repeated efforts, roused him in some degree from his stupor, he could give no account of the matter. He recollected nothing after having received Madge into his cart, in conformity with his master's orders; but his meeting some of the people from the market who offered him a glass, and his going with them

to the bridge end, while he left his horse to pick on the brae fit.

After long and useless search, Fernbraes was obliged to return home without having gained any further intelligence. He tried to persuade himself, and to persuade his worthy foster-brother, that since there was no trace to be found of the old woman, it was probable that she, weary of being left in the cold night air, had taken shelter in some cotter's house in the neighbourhood, and that they should have good accounts of her in the morning.

Duncan had his own reasons for being more uneasy about what had happened than he chose to inform his master, and, before daybreak, was again on foot to endeavour to ascertain if his conjectures had any foundation. So few carts passed that road, at least large carts, or coups as they were called, that with daylight he had no difficulty in tracing the wide wheel-marks from Fernbraes to the cottage of his good brother. From his door he found that he could even

trace the wheels of the cart to the wisp house at the bridge end, which was but a very little distance beyond the fisherman's cottage; and there, again narrowly inspecting the dust, he fancied he discovered several turns of a cart-wheel, which, with the newly-cropt thistles, seemed as if the horse had strayed at his own pleasure. On following these marks through all their zig-zags, he found a track of wheels on the short turf, as if again returning to the fishers. He measured the distance between the axle-trees, and found it to correspond exactly with those he had traced from Fernbraes.

Following this clue, which was very distinctly marked on the heath about twenty yards to the left of the main road, it conducted him past the cottage where his mother had been for about a mile along the shore, and then suddenly crossing the road descended a sloping sandy bank to the sea. His heart throbbed and the colour mounted to his face as he remarked on the sand a man's footstep of very large dimen-

sions,—a circumstance the more appalling, as Jock Glass was barefooted, and these impressions evidently belonged to one wearing shoes. He measured them by his own feet and found them so much larger, that there was only one person in the country to whom they could belong. If that person had guided the horse to such a place, it could not have been for good to his poor mother. The tide was now nearly full, and in the flood he lost all further traces of both cart and footsteps. Six hours before, when the cart must have been there, it was low water, which accounted for there being no traces of return, and for the sandy and wet appearance of the horse when he came home.

The footsteps—the enormous footsteps of the person, who must, from their position have led the horse, respect for his master's family, made honest Duncan shudder as if he had committed a crime in permitting himself to join, in idea, him who owned a shoe of that size, with such a subject. Duncan called to mind circumstances which had oc-

curred several years before, on the first disappearance of his mother, and which, in conjunction with the large footsteps, weighed deeply on his mind.

"It must be," he thought, "that my poor old mother was put into a boat at this place, and taken where I'll maybe never hear of her more, to be out of the way of them that wish her ill, and out of the care of them that wish her well, and what can I do to help her, or how can I come at the truth?"

Duncan's resolution was not to disturb the laird with suspicions, but to leave no stone unturned to discover whether they were ill or well founded; and in this intention he retraced his dreary path by the way he came. Several of the other people had also been out making inquiries in the cottages along the road, but without discovering any thing to throw light upon the fate of Madge M'Lean.

When the circumstances of the last night were generally known, the country-people

crowded to Fernbraes to hear all the particulars, and to add their own observations to the general store. That one person should disappear twice from the same place, was a thing unheard of. Some were disposed to attribute it to the compulsion of others, and some very naturally concluded that it was more likely to be a cantrip of the old wife's, who it was plain had ways of coming and going which were but known to herself, and therefore it would be but tempting fate to seek more into it.

Of this number was Miss Jamesina, when she gave her opinion out of her uncle's hearing; she was sure, also, that the old body had cast the glamour over Jock Glass, who had slept without moving from the time the rest had brought him home.

But let the case be what it might, the effect was that every creature in the country thought and talked of nothing else. Even those whose belief was the strongest in Madge's supernatural powers, contrary to their own opinion of the risk attending

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THE

NABOB AT HOME;

OR,

THE RETURN TO ENGLAND.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "LIFE IN INDIA."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
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such presumptuous curiosity, tried, while the daylight befriended them, to ascertain if traces had been left on earth of the way by which Madge had gone; and when none such could be found, they were only the more convinced "that to the like of her common ways are not necessary; that she had only to take the shape of any fowl she liked and flie awa at once. Many a time a queer black corby had been seen about Kenny M'Cra's chimney before she came home."

THE END OF VOL. II.

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C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, E

THE

NABOB AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.

Returning, he proclaims by many a grace—
By shrugs and strange contortions of the face—
How much a dunce that has been sent to roam,
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.

COWPER.

THE buzz of the events of the eventful night, joyful and sorrowful found their way to Kelpfield at an early hour in the morning; most fortunately Mr. Murdoch Ross

"As you please, Murdoch," answered his sister, laughing,—fully convinced in her own mind that Miss Jamesina and Mr. Murdoch were under the influence of very similar feelings—"if there are no hearts, to be broken, it little matters; but have you not gone too far to stop?

"Fortunately, no—certainly, no—my saying I wished to see Fernbraes did not amount to that; though after some things which *did* pass"—Mr. Murdoch pulled up the corners of his neckcloth and surveyed himself in the glass—"I would not like going to the house unless this business had given me a good reason; and before it cools, I shall just ride over. Fernbraes will be so occupied with it that he will not have time for any thing else. She certainly *has* as good a taste, as any person I have ever met with."

In his ride from Kelpfield to Fernbraes, Mr. Ross had leisure to reflect that it was impossible Dr. M'Alpin could be ignorant of the motive he had yesterday in seeking to meet him; and he further considered that

Fernbraes was not a sort of man to be treated with insult. Vanity whispered that the grief of the deserted damsel would also be very alarming, and that these circumstances taken together might make an absence on his part a very prudent measure.

Having settled this to his own satisfaction, and in a way which he hoped would seem natural to the parties concerned, he rode boldly forward, and entered the dining-room at Fernbraes, where he was guided by a multitude of voices talking together upon the topic which engaged all attention.

"This is a sad business, Fernbraes," he said, after his salutations were over;—"this is a very terrible business; and though I have this morning received a letter which harasses and torments me very much," looking towards Jamesina, who opened her wondering eyes as he spoke, "I could not lose a moment in riding over to know if I can be of any use to you."

"We expected to see you," answered the

doctor in his straightforward way, "before this unfortunate accident took place."

"I cannot tell you how much it has grieved me," returned Mr. Ross, interrupting the speaker and not giving Jamesina time to utter the words it was evident her lips shaped; "and more particularly as I have received a letter which requires my presence in London without sleeping by the way. I must set off this afternoon."

"This afternoon!" exclaimed Jamesina. "This afternoon, and leave us in such fear and trouble—it is really not kind!"

"I am the sufferer from this cruel necessity—but I have not a moment to speak my feelings upon the subject—when I come back you shall know all."

Mr. Ross spoke with such an air of haste that Fernbraes felt convinced that something important had occurred, and kindly wished him a good journey and a speedy return. Jamesina, on the contrary, better aware of some motives which might probably in-

fluence him, felt wretched in the almost certain overturn of hopes so near their completion. She had tact enough to perceive that there was studied effort in his manner to her, and unable longer to endure the doubt, she asked him if in the hurry of old Madge's story they had told him that her brother Malcolm was expected; but she had to do with one who could deceive as well as herself, and who for once set her sagacity at default.

"No, my dear Miss Sinclair," he answered, "this is the first I have heard of it; but you may believe I am delighted that you have some counterbalance to this vexatious occurrence, and that you should have a friend near you too, when he that would wish to comfort you is forced away."

The last sentence was said in an under voice, and had for the time the desired effect of reassuring the heroine, and enabling her to part from her recreant lover with more calmness than she could have done without the implied hope, though he had not been

gone a quarter of an hour, and she had time to think over all the occurrences of his visit, before her naturally suspicious temper filled her head with doubts.

"I will find from Robina whether he told me the truth or not, when he said that he did not know that my brother was expected;" but here again the doctor's straightforward way disappointed her project, for his first address in meeting Miss Robina, was—

"Your brother, who has just been here, tells us that you have not heard that my nephew, Malcolm M'Alpin, is expected before many weeks go round, and that we were in the midst of celebrating the joyful news, and drinking the young heir's health when this unlucky affair put a stop to every thing."

Robina looked at Jamesina, but did not contradict the statement her brother had made, and Jamesina had now no means of ascertaining its truth, and was therefore left to the fluctuation of her own hopes and fears.

CHAPTER II.

La nuit, d'un vol bruyant fendant l'espace sombre,
Elle observe le crime enseveli dans l'ombre.
DELILLE.

NEXT morning brought new rumours to Fernbraes. One man, as he was returning after midnight from the funeral of a friend, at a distance had seen a very large thing like a human creature, but without head, for a long plaid, or mantle, or something of the kind, flowed from the top to the bottom of it. It was going slowly along the road that the cart had passed, and scratching on the sand as it went. At the time there was but a watery glimpse of the moon, and though he could very well see the shape of it, be-

tween him and the sea, it was too dark to see the colour of the covering, "if it werena indeed a mort-cloth."

When he saw it turning from one side to another, as if it was moving the sand without arms, his sight began to reel, and he was almost afraid to look longer at it, for fear of seeing it change into something that shouldna be before his eyes. Once when he got to a good distance from it, he stopped on the top of a rock to look after it at its strange work; but it gave such a dreadful roar, that he took to his heels, and ran without once stopping or looking behind him, till he got to his own house; and his wife was almost as "sore frighted" as he was, to see him looking as white as a ghost,—a thing that had never before happened to him in his "born days." What it could be passed his comprehension, but he was very sure that it did not belong to this world.

Eppie Tamson had been at the shore before "grey daylight," to gather whilks before the sea came in; she saw marks on the bank

near the Black Rocks of a cart and horse, but she didna think muckle of that because she weel kenned that folk went that gate often for "sea-ware" (kelp), but amang the rocks what should she light upon, but a woman's toy mutch, with a handful o' grey hair sticking in it, and she couldna help wondering how it came there, for she had never heard tell of such a thing, syne mad Jenny Ronaldson drowned herself off thae very rocks, twenty years by gone at the Martinmas; she wad gang hame and bring the toy mutch, for in her hurry she had forgot it, and Duncan could see himself if ever his mother aught it.

Duncan, when he saw the cap in question, which he at once recognised as belonging to his mother, and the hair which stuck to it, as if pulled from the head of the wearer by violence, had no longer a doubt of the fate of his poor parent. "They have drowned the old woman," he said, "in the pool at the foot of the Black Rocks. Oh! that I could find out them that dared to do it—old

and poor as she was, she
such a deed should not
shall not if I live."

Duncan, with this new
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had as little success as be
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Rory More's account of
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ought to have, was an

which his honour was bound to disprove. He considered the subject so deeply that a thought struck him which he determined to put into execution, as perhaps it would help him in his search, and lead to a personal rencounter with his enemy.

His idea was to renew the large footsteps on the sand where they had been effaced, and return the next night to watch if any one came to brush them away. This he could easily effect, for at the time he had first noticed them he had measured them by his own feet, and taken the stride between them, that he might discover whether the step was that of a short or a tall man; he therefore, in pursuance of his new-formed project, replaced as nearly as possible all the effaced prints on the sand, from the spot where they had been first visible on turning down the bank from the public road, until they reached the high-water mark where the waves had covered them. This done Duncan returned to Fernbraes, in the inten-

tion of waiting the result, taking care to tell every one he met by the way that though the large footsteps had been brushed off the sand in the night, they had reappeared at daybreak, as it was well known that whatever pains were taken to conceal a crime, the earth would never cover it.

The laird, though sincerely grieved for the accident which he feared must have happened to his poor old nurse, refused to credit any of the stories which were afloat upon the subject, and respect for him prevented all the surmises which were current from coming to his ear. He naturally conjectured that the absence and subsequent intoxication of Jock Glass had left the horse to his own will, and that the undirected animal had certainly overturned the cart, and the poor old woman into the sea, where her cap might have stuck among the rocks. He was too well acquainted with the love of the vulgar in all countries for the marvellous and the horrible, to believe that any crime

had been committed, as, if in such a case the inclination existed, he could not discover any possible motive for its commission.

Duncan was, however, strongly prepossessed with another opinion, though he did not choose to tell his master the surmises which gained strength in his own mind the more he ruminated upon them ; but though he might keep the secret, he thought himself bound to revenge the deed.

As soon, therefore, as midnight had extended her raven wing over the sleeping world, and left the unblessed hour under the influence of those who shun the light, he retraced his way along the shore. The night was windy and exceedingly dark, but on such an errand he could not miss his way; and he reached the Black Rocks without meeting any thing worse than himself:—there, weary with his own thoughts, he sat down to listen, but all except the whistling of the wind and the beating of the surf was perfectly still. Once or twice he fancied he heard his own name repeated in a voice

familiar to his ear, but whether it was really a wailing voice, or the sighing of the wind round the rocks, and through the long dry tangle which hung about them he could not determine.

At another time he fancied he saw a huge black figure occupied as Rory More had described; but though he followed as fast as the darkness of the night would permit, and called repeatedly upon the creature, whether of this world or of another, to stay and face him, he received no answer but from the echoes on the shore, which repeated "Face me!"

Vexed to be baffled in these attempts, and resolved if possible to accomplish his wish, he continued to stride backwards and forwards on the same path until day broke, and he discovered to his astonishment that the large footsteps were again covered over as on the preceding night. What to think of it he could not determine; but the natural hardihood of his mind triumphed over his superstitious fears, and he again replaced

the marks as he had done before, resolved to abide another watch. He had his own motives for keeping his movements secret from his master, and his midnight rambles remained unknown to all except the object for whom they were undertaken.

Night after night he made the same excursion with the same ill success, and morning after morning he had the mortification to perceive that the marks of the preceding day were always effaced. Sleep forsook his eyes and colour his cheeks as he passed his nights in these dreary watches, or conflicts with the evil one, as he was almost disposed now to believe them. The country rung with accounts of the strange steps and noises that were heard every night on the road from Kelpfield to the Black Rocks, and the quantity of footsteps that were found on the sand, like the march of a regiment of men.

These frightful reports had gained such currency and credit, that few would venture to pass by the ill-omened spot after nightfall, and none unless under the influence which

defies fear, after the long hour has given the world over to the machinations of those who can only claim one in the twenty-four.

This harassing state of things had continued for not less than fourteen successive nights, and Duncan, although thwarted in his object, only became the more resolved in its pursuit: his daring was roused to such a pitch,—for these successive failures made him almost think that it was not an earthly being he had to contend with; but with Hamlet he was resolved, could he but see the creature of his search,

To cross it, though it blast him.

"I will return to this place," he said to himself, "while the life is in my body, until I see this thing, whatever it is, and know what it means."

CHAPTER III.

And lifting thence the burthen which he bore,
Heaved up the bank, and dashed it from the shore,
Then paused, and looked, and turned, and seemed to watch,
And still another hurried glance would snatch.

SPURRED on by intense curiosity, and thirst of revenge, which gained strength as its gratification was delayed, Duncan set out for his accustomed haunt, at a much earlier hour than he had hitherto done, and had hardly turned down the steep bank when he discovered the very object of his search in the act, as has been described, of scratching on the sand. Duncan stopped a moment to

consider the creature before him, and was soon convinced that the bulky person he saw thus employed, was no unsubstantial inhabitant of air, but one compounded of grosser elements; and goaded on by the desire of punishing a wretch, whom he could not for an instant doubt had been the murderer of his mother, he grasped the sword with which he had armed himself for the purpose, and making a sudden leap, struck his antagonist such a blow on the shoulder, that he brought him on his face and hands to the ground; but before he had time to lay hold of his fallen foe, or to disentangle himself from the mass of drapery in which he was shrouded, the wounded man had drawn a pistol from his cloak, and fired with such a certain aim, that Duncan, mortally wounded, fell on the sand; the other, forgetting his disguise in his anxiety to make sure work of what he could not now leave half done, threw off his garment from his right arm, and drew near the dying man.

"It is you," said Duncan, regarding the

figure which bent over him, and the eyes which scowled upon him from under the dark folds of the plaid, "ye are the only man on earth who had reason to fear my poor mother; but tell me what ye have done with her, and I will forgive you this."

"Busy, prying fool, take this for your pains," answered the other, and as he spoke discharged a second pistol at the head of his defenceless enemy.

The bullet did its work, and Duncan moved no more. As soon as the assassin was satisfied that the deed was accomplished, he dragged the body (which was too weighty for him to carry) along the shore into the deep water under the rocks, which was now ebbing fast, and would consequently carry it out to sea. He then endeavoured to efface the track which the body had made on the sand; but a faint watery ray of the moon, which was at its full, and had lighted him on the work of death, and discovered his features to the dying Duncan, was now obscured by dark clouds, presaging rain,

which he hoped would more effectually serve him.

The impossibility of accomplishing what he wished in the dark, and the pain of his wounded shoulder, now forced him to desist and think of retreat while it was in his power, trusting that a shower of rain would fall to wash out the marks he was obliged to leave behind him. He bound his plaid as tightly as he could round his left shoulder to alleviate the pain, and, if possible, stanch the bleeding, or at all events absorb the blood, rather than let it track his course, and appear as a witness against him. Having done this, he gained the main road above the bank, and then disappeared by a path best known to himself, leaving no mark by which he could be traced.

Duncan M'Lean's absence and irregular attendance at Fernbraes, had been so common since the night on which his mother was missing, that his non-appearance on the morning after the fatal events we have just mentioned, did not excite any remark, nor

was there any anxiety felt on his account, until the arrival of Eppie Tamson, at breakfast, with the very sword in her hand which every individual at Fernbraes knew to have been poor Duncan's most valued possession; the edge was in one place turned, and there was blood on the blade.

Eppie Tamson came flying up the road, or avenue, as Miss Jamesina called it, brandishing the sword, and screaming, "Oh, sirs! ochon ori! has na there been killing! has na there been murder! has na there been foul work at the Black Rocks wast by yonder! There is a loch of blood upon the sands, and the shape of a man's braid back, forby brains!"

"What is the woman talking about?" said the doctor, who had thrown open a sash of the dining-room window, when her frantic exclamations first reached his ear—"What is she doing with that sword, and how did she come by it?"

"I found it, Fernbraes," she said, coming up to the open window, "upon the sand;

but look at it yoursel—look at the edge of it—and look at the blade of it, and see to the colour that's upon it, an judge for yoursel if I am no right in what I say, that there has been foul work at the Black Rocks!"

The doctor took the sword, which every servant in the place, who now came crowding together, to know the cause of Eppie Tamson's outcries, declared to belong to Duncan M'Lean.

"But where is he?" said his master, "call him that he may answer for himself."

"He is no in the house, sir, nor has he been in it all night, for his bed is as cold as last year's snow."

Cussim Ali now came forward, and gave evidence in the best English he had acquired —"True, sahib, true, he not sleep in this house for many night—since what time his mother gone nobody know where. Many a time when I get up for **pugeah* at the rising sun, I see for him come in with that tulwar, and he look sorry and tire, like man who seek

* Pugeah—worship.

his enemy and not find him ; this night he go out that I know, but this morning he not come back."

Fernbraes now called to mind all the stories which had been in circulation, and though they appeared involved in mystery, there was too much reason to fear that some extraordinary crime had been committed, though who were the parties he could not conjecture. A dread preyed upon his mind that poor Duncan had taken vengeance into his own hands, and he feared to find that in this instance the faithful creature had been the aggressor.

Eppie Tamson's intelligence opened the mouths of all about her, who did not now hesitate to declare with one voice, that they believed old Madge had been put out of the way by unfair means.

" Put out of the way !" echoed Fernbraes —" who would think of meddling with such a poor old creature, or what would they put her out of the way for ?"

"It does no become me to say," answered the grieve; "but it is an odd thing to be lost off the public highway, between this and the Black Rocks, and that her son should be murdered for putting the muckle fitsteps on the sand, that were found there the night she was taken awa."

"Big footsteps!" answered his master, "who could they belong to? Is there any man in the parish that has bigger feet than the rest? A good way to know that would be—" he suddenly stopped what he was going to say, and coloured redder than crimson as a circumstance passed through his mind.

Every one had his own conjectures, but respect gave them no utterance. Fernbraes broke off the conversation with orders to some of those present to attend him to the place spoken of; an order which was gladly applied by every individual present to him and her self; so that when the laird rode down the avenue he was followed by a

troop of men, women, and children, all eager to see with their own eyes what had taken place.

When they did arrive, there could no longer be a doubt upon the subject. It was evident that something fatal had taken place, though who were the aggressors and who were the sufferers did not at first appear. The sand was deeply dyed in one particular spot, and covered with footsteps which were of two different sizes; those of the largest dimensions were most round the place where the victim had fallen, and some of them were still wet in blood. The grieve with the end of his stick dug down into the sand, and showed his master that there must have been, as Eppie Tamson had said, a loch of blood in that place to penetrate so deep. From it also the track to the sea was visible. It was plain that pains had been taken in some places for its erasure, though the darkness in which the deed must have been perpetrated had caused the person, whoever he was who made the attempt, to

deviate from the exact line, and consequently in some places it was found untouched, so that it could be clearly discerned that a weighty body had been dragged along. At the rocks the tracks were lost, and they were all of one opinion, that the murdered body had been thrown into the sea.

"The big fitsteps are aboot the red mark," said the grieve, "and I am right sure that it is our Duncan that has suffered, as his poor mother did before him."

Fernbraes had made the same remark, and, full of anxiety for the fate of his trusty follower, ordered the people to separate into companies and proceed along the shore in different directions—in the idea that the body of the murdered man would be cast up by the flood, and terminate doubt in certainty.

Stoneyards was a magistrate, and little as Fernbraes wished to see him after what had passed at their last meeting, he thought it right to ride over and require his assistance

in the present circumstances. Dismissing, therefore, his attendants on their different errands, he proceeded alone to the inhospitable dwelling of his brother-in-law, never less inclined to recognise their relationship than at this hour.

At the gate he was met by the young laird, who, after an awkward attempt at a civil salutation (for he had not forgotten or forgiven his uncle's rejoicing on the expected arrival of his brother Malcolm), told him that his father had come home sick from the hill, and was in bed at that moment and could not be spoken with.

At this information the doctor felt a strange sort of uneasiness; but he was instantly relieved by hearing his nephew say, that when they had come to tell him that something was wrong, his father, before going to sleep had given orders about Duncan M'Lean's business, as he was in great wrath that such a thing should have taken place, as one might say, at his own door.

He had sent for the constables, and told them what they were to do.

"That's well, Hugh! but surely your father must be very ill, to go to bed at this hour of the day; and if that is the case it is fortunate that I am come in time to help him. Sudden illnesses are not just the thing for strong men of his size and years."

"I wanted to send to Fernbraes, when he told me of it," answered Hugh with indifference, "but he would not hear of doctors or doctoring—he never had much faith in their skill."

"That may be, Hugh, as he never stood in need of it, but go to him and tell him that I am upon the spot."

Hugh, who seemed perfectly indifferent about the whole matter, did as he was bid, but soon returned to say that his father was asleep, and that he did not like to disturb him.

"If that is the case, Hugh," said the doctor, "when he wakes he will maybe no need me; and if he does, ye can send a line to

Fernbraes, and I'll be with you without loss of time."

When Fernbraes arrived at home, he found worthy Mr. Shiftwell, the sheriff clerk of the county, in close consultation with Miss Jamesina. "He had been greatly shocked to hear of all the alarms which the good family at Fernbraes had suffered, and he had mounted his galloway, and ridden over to offer his poor services as far as they would go in the county, to discover who were the perpetrators, aiders, and abettors of such horrid acts."

Miss Jamesina was all gratitude for such friendly interest, and she protested that she could not think enough of Mr. Shiftwell's coming to them in such a time of distress, though she did not believe that any one could help them. After what had passed she would be afraid to go the length of herself in the dark—it was awful to think of it—the old woman always had a character of kenning more than she ought to do, and the way in which she went away seemed very

like it.—For her own part she would not be surprised if all the marks on the sand turned out to be but glamour, and that Duncan was after all just whisked away in a whirlwind by his unchancy mother.

Miss Jamesina had always been particularly averse to the idea that any act of violence had taken place, and preferred the much more probable supposition which she made to her old confidential friend, who was too civil flatly to contradict her, though he was in his law capacity much inclined to doubt that her account of the matter would stand in any court. He had his own reasons, too, for being satisfied with what she said, though after her uncle's return she let the subject drop, well knowing that her opinions were not likely to meet with his approbation; he was however too much occupied with his own thoughts to attend to her gossip. The singular fate of two persons in his family (for he had now no doubt but that his foster-brother was the victim, since there was no other man missing in the

parish), and what reason any one could have to commit such crimes upon those who had always lived in love and respect with their neighbours, was a mystery he could not solve.

"Did you ever hear, Mr. Shiftwell," he inquired, "of Madge M'Lean or her son Duncan's being upon ill terms with any one in the county?"

"No, certainly," interrupted Jamesina, "nobody ever heard of such a thing, Duncan was always well liked far and near; and his mother too, if it were no the notion that some people had of her being no ower canny."

Mr. Shiftwell took his cue from the fluent speaker, and answered civilly.

"I cannot say that ever I did, Fernbraes; the only one that I knew of that had reason to be ill pleased with her, would think scorn to notice the like of her."

"Who was it—and what was it about, Mr. Shiftwell?"

The worthy clerk, who seemed gratified

at the prospect of more attention than the laird usually bestowed upon him, opened his mouth with a preparatory "Hem!"

Miss Jamesina made him a sign, and he closed by observing,

"It's an old story, in the time of my late worthy predecessor, old Mr. Fox."

"What for would you tell my uncle, Mr. Shiftwell," said Miss Jamesina, as soon as Fernbraes had left the room; "what need is there to gang over bygone tales, when ye see he is vexed with one thing after another? These old stories have nothing to do with this."

"As you say, Miss Jamesina—as you say—and you know that there are none of your friends who would be so sorry to vex the laird in this time of perplexity as myself—you have not one who is more devoted to your interest than your humble servant, Farquhar Shiftwell."

Miss Jamesina replied with a glance of disdain to what she felt to be a very presumptuous profession on the part of old Donald

Fox's head clerk, as she had been accustomed to call him before he stepped into the shoes of his patron; but this was not a time to provoke him with scorn, and though he felt the motive, he was for the present content to overlook it, satisfied that he knew more of Miss Jamesina's affairs than would permit of her breaking with him.

These friends of old standing separated, therefore, with the same cordiality with which they had met, though Jamesina could not help muttering to herself after he had taken his departure,

"It well sets him indeed, the weaver's son at the West Loch to even himself to me —the little sneaking creature that he is—because he thinks that I canna do without him; but if Kelpfield only comes back, I'll let him see that I'll gar him stand with his hat in his hand, instead of glowering with his green eyes and calling himself my humble servant indeed!"

CHAPTER IV.

La noirceur masque en vain les poisons qu' elle verse,
Tout ce sait tot ou tard et la vérité perce:
Par eux mêmes souvent les méchants sont trahis.

GRESSET.

IN the evening Fernbraes proposed sending over a messenger to Stoneyards to ask for Mr. Sinclair, as they had received no tidings from his son: a proposal, however, to which Miss Jamesina objected; she said, if her father was not very well, the noise of the servants in the house clattering with every strange face they saw would disturb him, and at present their heads were so in the bees, that there was no getting them to

hold their tongues, besides they were so full of ghosts and witches that she doubted if any of them would venture. At any rate she thought she had better walk over herself in the morning and see her father, and if her uncle had no objection just stay two or three days for change of scene; for really, as her uncle was going into the county-town about what had happened, she was afraid to stay at Fernbraes by herself.

The doctor made no objection to her arrangement, and accordingly next morning, after having seen him set forth on his business, she walked over to Stoneyards, taking only a herd-boy with her to carry the things she thought necessary, and whom she discharged at her father's door, taking her bundle out of his hand, and not permitting him to enter or speak with any one on pretence of making a noise.

As soon as she got into the house, she asked of the fat barefooted lass, who was the first person she met, "What was the matter with Stoneyards?"

takes to such drink when he could do better."

"But what does he complain of; if he is so bad as that, surely he complains of something? and why will he no see our uncle?"

"Ye ken he has often said that he doesna like any of the black cattle without horns—that means ministers, lawyers, and doctors; but I may as well tell you, Jamesina, though he desired that I would not speak about it to any body, that yesterday morning he fell into a hole going to the hill, and hurt and cut his foot so much that he canna put it under him; indeed he would not have told me, if I had not seen blood upon his clothes, by the token that I threw some of them into the fire, as he told me that every body's head in the country is so turned with fearful things just now, that he did not wish to have his share of it."

During this narrative, Jamesina's usually stationary colour had varied once or twice, and she almost found her worst fears real-

—that they were ignorant of his complaint, and that it did not seem to attract any particular notice in the house.

"You know, mem, that he had always the custom of going to the hill long before daylight to see what the shepherds were about, and that he went in and out, as he likit himsel. No one ever took any notice of him, and he went or he came as he saw fit."

Satisfied with this account, Miss Jamesina desired the maiden to get her room ready for her as she meant to stay a day or two at Stoneyards, and next went in quest of her brother, whom she found whistling and dressing his fishing-tackle.

"I am sorry to hear, Hugh, that our father is so ill. What is the matter with him?"

"Troth, Jamesy, I don't very well know; but I fancy it must be something, since he has neither eaten nor drank since he has been in the blue bed, if it be not water, and I think a man must be ill indeed who

takes to such drink when he could do better."

"But what does he complain of; if he is so bad as that, surely he complains of something? and why will he no see our uncle?"

"Ye ken he has often said that he doesna like any of the black cattle without horns—that means ministers, lawyers, and doctors; but I may as well tell you, Jamesina, though he desired that I would not speak about it to any body, that yesterday morning he fell into a hole going to the hill, and hurt and cut his foot so much that he canna put it under him; indeed he would not have told me, if I had not seen blood upon his clothes, by the token that I threw some of them into the fire, as he told me that every body's head in the country is so turned with fearful things just now, that he did not wish to have his share of it."

During this narrative, Jamesina's usually stationary colour had varied once or twice, and she almost found her worst fears real-

ized; but she made no comment to her brother except that he had done very wisely to keep himself out of the mouth of fools at such a time, and to inquire whether he had told the circumstance to their younger sister.

"What do you take me for, Jamesina? am I like a woman, to let my tongue run? Besides Barbara is down to spend a week with Mrs. M'Askel."

"So much the better," thought Jamesina, but she only answered, "I never suspected you, Hugh, of any thing of the kind; I know that you are above that, and I would lay my life upon it that nobody will ever hear of this from you, not even our uncle if he should come here; for you know he has some queer ways and may try, not knowing your cleverness to find out what he wants; but he would never let you find out what he was to do with Fernbraes, and now you may be upsides with him."

"And so I will," answered Hugh, swallowing the bait.

Jamesina then left him, and proceeded to her father's apartment, where, after having knocked twice, she was desired to come in. She was at once sensible as the maid had told her, that there was a great change in his voice, and that he spoke in a tone of feebleness which must either proceed from severe illness or some material cause. She went up to the bed and inquired very particularly into the state of his health; but in answer could only extract general complaints of illness and inability to walk from the pain of a swelled and sprained ankle.

Jamesina wished to send for her uncle, a proposal which was at once negatived. Her father told her he wanted nothing but rest and quiet to be quite himself again; and that the sight of a doctor would make him worse, and not better.

She inspected, with a scrutinizing glance, the whole appearance of the room and bed. She remarked that there was no part of the clothes he must have put off visible; but she at the same time observed that there was

nothing to confirm her worst fears, or rather to excite the suspicion of others. The bed stood in a kind of dark recess; the curtains were drawn all round it, so that, though she ventured to hold them back when she was speaking, she could only see that her father's countenance was much paler than usual. She thought that he seemed pleased, after having rejected her proposal to send for her uncle, to hear that he was from home, and that she intended to stay at Stoneyards during his absence.

"You will like better to have me in your room," she said, "than that idle taupies of lasses, when ye are sick; and I'll take care that they dinna make noise aboot the house, or let a' the waif folk in the country come clavering here."

"Do that, Jamesina," he answered, feebly; "and now leave me, I think I will sleep."

Jamesina left the room; but when she got to the outside of the door stood to listen. She heard a groan of great pain, which she was certain must have been suppressed in

her presence. Wishing, if possible, to get more light on the subject which haunted her, she stole on softly to the door of a room which was occupied by her father as a kind of private apartment, where he kept his clothes and papers, and settled his accounts; but it was locked, and she could not enter.

After a moment's reflection, she knew that was a thing which often occurred, particularly when her father had made sales, as he always kept the sums of money which he received from butchers and wool-dealers in that room. Her mother's apartment was the next to it. There she had died; and it had never been opened or occupied since her death—from the day of her funeral it had remained locked up. She knew that there was a door from it into her father's counting-room, as it was called, and she recollected that the door opened inwardly. The temptation was strong. By this means she would probably come to the knowledge of what she had to dread, and be enabled to

take measures against it, if such were necessary. The key was in her own possession, and hung, with all the other spare keys, on a nail in the storeroom. She instantly descended to take it from the spot where it had remained so long, that it was scarcely to be perceived in the cobwebs which covered it, fully determined, as soon as the house was quiet, to seize this opportunity of satifying the mixed feeling of dread and curiosity which tormented her.

CHAPTER V.

See how the host's kind heart with pleasure beats,
And conscious joy, while thus his friends he greets,
Them welcomes to his hospitable home,
With warmth and generous feeling all his own,
Rejoiced again beneath his roof to find
Those whom with sorrow he had left behind.

THORNTON.

JAMESINA was interrupted in her meditations by the trampling of horses' feet in the little stone-paved court before the door, and looking out was surprised to see Niel Ronaldson dismount from his own horse, while he gave the bridle of hers, which he had brought with him, ready saddled, to a lad whom their noise had brought from the stable. "What can be the meaning of

this?" thought Miss Jamesina, "the world is surely turned upside down, when I canna get leave to stay peaceably here for a meal of meat, but there must be an express sent after me. What's wrong next?"

She went down stairs with all speed to prevent talking below, and at the house-door met the individual Niel, who told her that an English gentleman and two ladies, friends of his master's had arrived at Fernbraes, and that the black creature, Cussim Ali, had sworn that his master would break his heart, if they went away from his house, and "he no at home." He thought it best to take her horse and bring back Miss Jamesy, and he told the Cornal, for it seems that was his title, what he was going to do, who, honest man, seemed very well pleased, and Cussim Ali, who knew our master's likings of old, had set the cook to work without loss of time.

His auditor had lost all patience at this detail. "Was ever any thing so vexatious!"

she said. "Heard ever ony body the like of folks coming this gate to herrie a man's house in his absence. What for Niel Ronaldson did ye na just tell them that the laird and the leddy were from home, and that ye didna ken when they would be back—and is this a time for feasting and guzzling?—Oh pity me, wi' you—I have a good mind to send you back Niel to tell them that I am here"—"with my sick father"—she was going to add, but she thought better of it; that was a subject upon which, perhaps, the less that was said the better, and she recollected too, that if it was known in the country that Stoneyards was sick, it would not be thought that much was the matter with him when his daughter left his house to go and entertain company.

This last consideration fixed her, and she returned into the house, first telling Niel Ronaldson to get her horse ready—to tell her brother what had happened—and to desire that he would inform her father that

she would come back the first moment she could.

Hugh finding that there was company at Fernbraes, and that his uncle whom he could not endure was absent, wished to go over with Jamesina.—"Ye will want somebody to sit with this strange cornal after dinner, Jamesy."

"No, no, Hugh—has na my uncle said, a thousand time, and a thousand to tell it, that men in the Indies don't care for sitting as ye do here."

"But, for a' that, for the honour of the family ye must hae somebody to pass the bottle as ye canna do it yoursel."

"Never fear. Our father will may be want you, and it would no likely be just so pleasant for you, Hugh, who are the head of the family to hear them speaking of Malcolm's coming in before you, and that turn makes you quits with my uncle, if ye never go near his house."

"And so it does, Jamesina," observed the disappointed youth, who, in the prospect of

a *good sitting*, had been willing to let the affront put upon his seniority lie dormant until a fitter opportunity.

His sister left him satisfied, that she had carried her point.—"It would be strange indeed, if I could na make such a stirk as he, do my bidding," she thought.

Mounting her pony, she retraced her way to Fernbraes, taking the key of her "mother's room" with her, though not a little vexed at the delay her curiosity was obliged to suffer. She had leisure, however, to reflect that the dress she then wore, though perfectly good for walking over the hill to Stoneyards, was not in the least fit to be presented before English strangers; and when she reached the house, she first marched to her own apartment, where she required the assistance of her handmaid, Kate Roy, to make a more fashionable toilet.

When this important metamorphosis was completed, she descended to the drawing-room, where Colonel Cheapstow, after having introduced himself as the old friend

of Dr. M'Alpin, presented Mrs. and Miss Cheapstow to Miss Sinclair.

The names were well known to her as she had often heard them spoken of by her uncle, though he had not made her acquainted with Eleonora's story, and as she had an object in satisfying him just at present, she exerted in her way all her powers of pleasing. After the first compliments were over, Mrs. Cheapstow asked Miss Sinclair when she had heard from her brother, Malcolm, and understood with pleasure that there was a prospect of his immediate return.

Jamesina made a thousand excuses for the absence of her uncle, whom she said she knew would regret his being from home, more than she could tell; Colonel Cheapstow at once said, that as his only object in coming to the Highlands was to visit his old friend, and that he had forgotten to apprize him of his intention, he would certainly remain quietly where he was until

the return of his host, which he fancied could not be very distant.

Jamesina was alarmed at this resolution, and saw there was no alternative between the weariness of entertaining strangers, when her mind was racked by other things, and sending off an immediate express after her uncle to inform him that his friends had arrived. Without such an urgent necessity for his presence she would certainly have been much better pleased with his absence, which would have left her more at liberty; but as things stood she was forced "to put the best face upon the matter," and not give any one reason to suppose she had more to think of than other people.

"It is so provoking, too," she thought, "that just when strangers are come, Kelpfield must needs go to London, at the very time when there will be such feasting and doing in this house, that he couldna pass being here every day; but with this fine

journey all that will be for nothing. What is the good of taking trouble for the old colonel and his family, and asking all the country to meet them; if he had been here, I would no have grudged the turkeys, and the ducks, and the geese—let alone the fat bullock my uncle will kill, do and say what I can against it. I thought, maybe, that beast would be killed for another occasion."

Colonel Cheapstow and the ladies, fatigued with their journey, soon retired for the night, leaving their officious hostess more at liberty to speculate upon her own affairs. The events of the last fortnight had now become hateful to her ears; and being obliged to hear all the idle rumours afloat in the county, and the new particulars every day retailed from one to another, with the insatiable love for the marvellous which seemed to have annihilated every other feeling in the minds of her neighbours and servants, was a state of

society from which she would gladly have escaped.

Next morning she had every circumstance to go over with her guests, who had heard them from their own servants, who had gathered them from the domestics in the house. She could not with her English visiters insist so much on the probability of witchcraft as she had been in the habit of doing with all her own household when her uncle was not within hearing, and she suffered martyrdom when at the sum of the whole, the colonel said, "that he hoped the cowardly assassin would be taken and hanged."

Before breakfast was finished, a repast by the by, of which Colonel Cheapstow very much approved, a scrawling note was brought from Stoneyards, written, as Mr. Hugh told his sister, at his father's commands, to desire that she would come back immediately, "as he was not better, but much worse."

What to do in such circumstances puzzled Miss Jamesina more than before. To go away and leave every thing to the care of servants to do what they liked, and to live at rack and manger, when the house was full of company was a moral impossibility; but her presence was indispensable at home, to keep people from making discoveries which might have frightful consequences. Yet how to account to her uncle for leaving his house at such a time, without telling him of her father's illness—and he the very last person that should know it, was what she could not determine, even accustomed as she was to seek ostensible reasons very different from those by which she was actuated. She thought of telling him that in her sister's absence, an offer had been made for the butter and cheese at Stoneyards, and that her father had ordered her to see it all weighed and classed according to the different rates. This, she knew, would have been a feasible enough reason for her staying away a day or two at any

other time; but just when he was from home himself, and when his greatest friends were come, she feared it would not do, and that he would suspect that there was something under it.

"He has such curious ways with him," she thought, "sometimes a child might blindfold him and lead him by the nose, and at others, all my art will not make him believe but what he likes himself. Indeed I sometimes think every silly body about the place has more credit with him than me."

Jamesina's tact, subtle as it was, could never lead her to comprehend a character like her uncle's. To the false, truth does not exist.

While she was turning over in her mind what sort of an excuse would be best, the agreeable noise of horses' feet clattering up the avenue drew her to the window, and in another minute her uncle was welcoming the friends he had so much wished to see. Long intimacy had endeared them to each

other, and when Jamesina witnessed the meeting, she hugged herself in the wisdom of her conduct towards them.

"Welcome to Fernbraes, my excellent friends," said the doctor, cordially taking a hand of Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow, "and you will see my dear Eleonora, that I have not forgotten all the promises I made on board ship of making you acquainted with my country. We only want my nephew now to be perfectly happy."

"And we'll have him too, uncle, before long," joined Miss Jamesina.

"Ye may think," continued the doctor, "that at first sight, Mrs. Cheapstow, this place is not altogether what I used to describe to you at Lucknow, but I hope you will like it better when you know it longer."

"I have no doubt of it, my excellent friend; the weather was so fine yesterday when we arrived that I have a most favourable impression of it."

"At all events you are well lodged here,"

said the colonel, "and you ought to have, judging from your situation, abundance of excellent fish and mutton, with venison and moor-game to boot, things which go far to make any place pleasant."

"We have all these things in abundance, colonel, as I hope to show you by and by; in the mean time let us return to the breakfast-table, for I have not yet broke bread."

"How wrong it was of you, uncle, to come out without taking something!" said Jamesina, "if I had been there I would have looked after you who never think of yourself."

Jamesina, affectionately attentive to her uncle's wishes, particularly when she had a purpose to carry, went down stairs herself to order what she knew he liked best, and waited until he had finished his meal, before she told him that she had a message from her brother, who wanted her at Stoneyards, for some reason or another.

Miss Jamesina found, on second thoughts, that the more casual her movements seemed

to be, the less notice they were likely to attract; and she thought also, that it would be useless to say any thing about time, as she trusted that perhaps chance might stand her friend, and furnish her with a better excuse for not reappearing that night than she might be able to invent. Her palfrey was therefore ordered, and after taking a ceremonious leave of the "stranger ladies," she set forth, leaving her uncle too happy in the society of his friends to occupy himself much about her. She had given orders before her departure, which she hoped would keep him in good humour with her, whether she returned or not; for she had wisely considered that if every thing at table was as it ought to be, her presence would be the less missed. She had charged the old housekeeper and cook "to exert their skill for the honour of the Highlands, and show the great colonel and the English ladies that they were no just come into a land of savages."

The fearful waste all this would occasion

was to be sure very grievous and hard to be borne, but to keep people's thoughts and tongues from things with which they had nothing to do, "it would be a' well warred." She had even condescended so far as to take "the black creature," as she always called Cussim Ali, into consultation upon what the Lucknow gentleman best liked.

The servants and neighbours had now other things to think of than what had lately taken place; the arrival of guests at Fernbraes was soon generally known, and in the course of the day all the nearest neighbours had come to pay their respects to the strangers, and show their regard for the laird by inviting him and his visiters to every house within ten miles round. Amongst the number was the doctor's friend and favourite Miss Robina Ross; and though he was not much accustomed to observe such things, he could not help remarking that she seemed struck with Eleonora from the first moment of their meeting.

"I am glad to see, Miss Robina," he said

" that ye like my little lassie; for that is the name she always gets from me."

" There is something in her sweet face, Fernbraes, that brings back the days of lang syne to my heart. She is the living picture of my poor brother Kenneth who is dead and gone."

Miss Ross, charmed with her new acquaintance, paid a long visit, and engaged the doctor and his guests to come and cheer her solitude, " for since my brother went to London I have not seen a single creature. But it is curious that all this time I should forget my friend Jamesina. Where is she doctor?"

" Rode over to Stoneyards two hours ago: her brother wanted her, it seems."

Miss Robina had more reason for remarking this information than any one was aware of. The evening after the murder of Duncan M'Lean, for his disappearance now went universally by that name, she had been to visit a sick person near the shore, and as the fineness of the weather tempted

her, returned part of the way on the sands. Her attention was attracted by something black in the surf which was rolling in at her feet with the flowing tide, and she stopped to ascertain if possible what it could be, prepossessed with the idea that it might have some connexion with the horrible transactions of the last night. When it came within reach she stretched forward her umbrella, and drew to land a shoe of more than ordinary dimensions.

"Is it possible?" she thought, looking earnestly at the object before her, which was of better workmanship than the brogues usually worn by the common people, and was tied with a ribbon instead of a leathern thong, or *point* as they called them; "and this then is the termination of this fearful night's work: this is what it has come to at last! There was no other man in the country that had an interest to do what has been done, but him that this shoe belongs to, and if it were not for them that must bear the disgrace of his guilt, I would this moment send

it to them who would let him hear of it; but this must not be. Wicked as *he* is, it is enough for them to be kin to such as he. This must not come upon them, and never shall it, if I can help it."

Miss Robina stood looking at the soaked shoe, and then wrapping it up in her pocket-handkerchief, returned to her own home, where she deposited it out of the way. She had seen somebody from Stoneyards, who had mentioned to her that the laird was not well. When she heard at Fernbraes of Jamesina's sudden call, she felt fully persuaded that Stoneyards must have been very severely wounded in the rencounter; for all circumstances taken together, left not a doubt that *he* was the man. It was clear to her that Fernbraes was unacquainted with the causes of suspicion against his brother-in-law, though she fancied that it must be otherwise with Jamesina; and she returned home after her visit, not a little vexed with the sort of connivance into which she was forced.

CHAPTER VI.

——— ——— Art thou but
A false creation—
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?

* * * *

——— There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business, which informs
Thus to mine eyes.

SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN Jamesina arrived at Stoneyards she found her father suffering from a violent attack of fever which had come on in the night, and which seemed to her to be of a very serious appearance. His sleep was short and interrupted, frequently broken by starts and mutterings, which she was sensible would be but too likely to attract

notice from any one within hearing. What to do in such circumstances she hardly knew. She would have given much to have had the advice of her uncle ; but she knew that if he came, he must discover what she most wished to conceal—and she feared that the impetuosity of his temper, and his feelings of right and wrong, would not permit his lending countenance to any concealment of such aggravated offences. At any rate she would endeavour to find out what there was to *conceal*, before she ventured upon seeking such perilous assistance.

As soon as the house was quiet for the night, which was at a very early hour, though to her impatience it seemed never likely to arrive, she took up a candle and stole softly to her mother's room. The servants slept so far out of hearing in the top of one of the wings, that she did not dread interruption from them, and her brother Hugh had as usual taken such a potent share of whisky-punch, that she was very certain, though his room was in the same part of the

house, that few sounds could disturb him after his head was once upon his pillow. She opened the door of the forbidden apartment, and as soon as she had entered shut it softly after her, almost afraid to find herself in a place which remained in the exact state in which it was left the day of her mother's funeral. She trembled as she passed the mirror, and saw her own gliding figure reflected back from its dark surface. She held the lock of her father's room-door in her hand for a few minutes after she had turned the bolt, almost incapable to enter—not knowing, as she thought, what she might see there,—and notwithstanding her old habits of eavesdropping, feeling something like remorse at the step she was taking; but the idea that it was for good, and not for evil, encouraged her to open the door,—and she saw enough to convince her, that her worst fears were realized, and that her parent was a murderer!

While she was gazing on the fearful plaid —literally died in its horrid hue—she fan-

cied that the outer lock of the opposite door slowly turned;—she might be deceived,—but on looking again was convinced that the bolt was withdrawn. Terrified at the idea of being caught in such a situation, she snatched up her candle and escaped by the way she came ; but she had not shut the door after her, when she heard her father say in a tone of strange emotion—

"Are *you*, too, come from the grave to witness against me ?"

"It is me !" she exclaimed, as well as her agitation would permit, fearful that his noise would betray him.—"It is me!"

"I know it, Marion ; and ye are come to tell me, that though murder may lie hid for years, it will rise in judgment at last."

Jamesina, aware of his critical situation, made a desperate effort, opened the door, and stood before him. His glazed eyes and wandering intellect could hardly discern the living being who spoke, from her whom his imagination had conjured up from the grave to upbraid him with his crimes.

"Hear me, father: and be composed," said Jamesina, collecting her spirits for the effort. "No one knows this but me;—no one need know it, if you will only be quiet; and it was that I might find means to hide it that brought me here. Be guided by me—return to your bed, and let me act."

The unexpectedness of the meeting; the sight of a woman's garment going out of *that* door, acting upon a guilty conscience, and a head confused by fever, almost persuaded Stoneyards that he had seen an inhabitant of the other world, and he stood pale and motionless before his daughter, his huge figure wrapped in a multitude of linen folds, which crossed over his right shoulder, and passed under the left arm; but when the first impression had passed from his mind, the hardened ruffian was almost disposed to laugh at his own weakness. He listened for a moment, and finding all was still, said coolly—

"Ye are right, Jamesina—ye are quite right; and if I had been wise I would have

told you all this ill-fared scrape at first: but I cannot stand long,—and as ye said, I'll go back to my bed, for my head begins to swim; and when ye have locked the doors come to me, and we'll talk of what is to be done, to get over this bad job."

After he was gone, Jamesina fastened the doors of her mother's apartment as she had found them, and returned to her father, whom she found groaning in agony from the pain caused by his exertion. As soon as the smart of his wound had a little subsided, he proceeded to state what had been the motives of his conduct, according to his own ideas of right and wrong.

"Ye'll may be mind, Jamesy, that at the time of your grandfather's death, I took in hand his affairs as next of kin to the heir, and there were some sums besides, which your uncle remitted for other things. As ill luck would have it, at that very time I was pressed for money, and as I knew that I could at any time replace it, I didna think much of taking what came into my hands to

save my credit when I was so much in want of it;—but though things went very well after, and I greatly increased my sheep, I could never make it convenient to repay the money, and I just wrote a letter to your uncle to the Indies, to give an account of my management, without saying ony thing aboot that. Your mother, who was better at the pen and ink than I was, came to the knowledge of the business.

"Auld Madge, who ye kenned was always an auld-farraned, lang-headed, glib-tongued wife, if she werena something waar, came by some of her cantrips to find it out also, and had the impudence to speak to me aboot it, at a time when she thought she had gotten an advantage over me; but it ill set the like o' her to dictate to me, and I garred send her out of the country for her pains, and she was keepit where I hoped she wad never hae come to travail me again; but by some cast of her trade the laird is no lang back to Fernbraes, when the old hag cheated them that watched her and and got here as

ye ken. I well knew that it wad na do to let her get her tongue loose, and I didna see much harm in throwing an auld useless creature like her, into the sea, in place of letting her breed mischief in quiet families wi' going back on bygone tales. All that I am sorry for is, that I did na do it at once ten years ago, and now all this wadna hae come of it. I trusted that the country-folk wad take her non-appearance for another flight like the first, but my feet on the sand took the notice of her muckle wrong-headed son, who must needs to be sure watch to discover. It wad never do for me to let such steps to be seen by the whole countryside, and I was therefore obliged to sweep them ava every night.

"Many a good laugh I hae had to myself, while I was doing it; and once when Rory More stopped to look, I roared like a sea-calf, to keep him from coming back again, and I made myself sure that the neighbours wad be too much frightened with the notion that Madge had friends who could not show

themselves in daylight to come and disturb me at such hours. But the fool, Duncan, who was running on the fate that was dreed for him, must forsooth come upon me sword in hand, and as I doubt left me a kenspeckle mark on my left shoulder, which will last me all my days; the blade is wellnigh out from the back. What could I do in self-defence, but put the life out o' him? for if I hadna killed him, he wad hae killed me—however, after I had done it, I had leisure to know that the law would call it murder, so I made the best of my way home, though I had lost one of my shoes at the rocks, and cut my foot in consequence—but I have lost so much blood, and am so little able to help myself, that I doubt without your assistance I may be able to get through it."

"That ye shall have, depend upon it—but it is a pity ye didna tell me sooner."

"Yes; I might have known, Jamesy, that ye are no a woman to be frighted with straws."

Jamesina protested that she was relieved

to hear that it was *no worse;* she did not very well see how her father could have *helped* the *accident* which happened with Duncan M'Lean, though she knew that it would not be so easy to persuade the rest of the world of that. The crimes committed were not in her opinion to be compared with the disgrace which would follow, if they were brought to light. To have the head of the family hanged like a thief by the common law, would be a blot for ever in their 'scutcheon; "if it had been rebellion, or any gentlemanlike crime, it would not signify—but all the stories *that* would bring out—Oh! she would never live to hear them!"

With these thoughts and feelings she set herself to deliberate what was to be done for her purpose. To get rid of the bloody plaid was not an easy undertaking, and all the rest of the clothes were in the same condition, with the exception of the stockings, neckcloth, and pocket handkerchief, which

had been bound round the wounded foot, and burned by Hugh.

She first thought of burning the rest also, but then she knew that the singed smell of wool at that hour would raise the inmates of the family with the idea that the house was on fire. She returned to the counting-room, where she burnt the linen, and carried the woollen down to the little burn at the end of the house, and as soon as she had deposited the clothes in the pool, where the cattle drank, to steep, and placed stones on the several articles to prevent them being carried away with the stream, she returned into the room whence she had taken them, and with soap and water carefully effaced every mark on the floor.

Stoneyards had, on reaching his own house, changed his clothes in his counting-room, and had wrapped a sheet tightly across his shoulder in place of the plaid. When his daughter had with great pains restored every thing in the room to its usual

appearance, she returned to the burn to withdraw the soaked garments, which she hoped had been thoroughly cleansed by the flow of pure water, not a little satisfied in her own mind with having been able to effect so much without leaving traces behind. Though her father's rough bandage had staunched his wound, it had now become so painful and hard, that it much aggravated his sufferings; before morning his fever returned with increased violence, and Jamesina plainly perceived, that without medical assistance his life would be in danger. To send for her uncle was a thing not to be thought of, and to call in another medical man, without informing him would be betraying her secret as effectually. She knew that Dr. Willy at Dolor, would neither see nor inquire into any thing but what the family chose, and she earnestly wished that at present she could have his assistance. Once she thought of taking Hugh into her confidence, but she soon dismissed the idea, as impolitic, and ultimately useless.

"He has neither head nor hands," she thought, "and if the worst comes to the worst nobody can extort from him what he does not know."

In case of her father's death, a discovery must be made, and she dreaded the thought of figuring as heroine in such a tale. To contrive to get her uncle out of the way and then to get the assistance of Dr. Wiley, was the only means which her head, fertile as it was, could devise—for this purpose, after mature consideration, she wrote the following letter to her sister Mrs. M'Askel :—

"Stoneyards,

"My dear Grizzy,

"As ye well know the sisterly interest that I take in you and your's, ye will be the less surprised at the proof of it I am going to give you—ye know well that the honor and credit of the family have always lain near my heart, and that I watch over every thing that can touch it—ye will be pleased to learn that ye have an opportunity now to do what will without doubt be agreeable to our uncle

Fernbraes—ye know how precise he is about what he calls friendly attentions to them that are in his good graces, and how liberal he is in minding such things at another time. Now, a thought has just struck me, that as you wanted to send your son, my nephew Jemmy to the Indies, this wad be the time to set aboot it. A great Colonel of our uncle's friends is come to stay with him at Fernbraes for some time, with his wife and only child, a great heiress she will be, and it would be worth Archie's while, your husband's brother, to look after her. Now, I was just thinking that if ye were to ask him, and them all to stay a week or so with you at Long Byars, it would please our uncle, and may be profit you. He thought much of the things that ye sent him by the last carrier, because they came when he had friends in the house, and he wad think more of this. The sooner the invitation is sent, the better it will look. You have the circuit ball the night after to-morrow, and it would seem as if ye thought much of the pleasure of his friends to ask the

young lady there. If he goes he'll tak so many things from Fernbraes with him, that ye'll no have much trouble, and I'll take care to see to it myself.

"To prevent mistakes I send this by express, and will expect an answer by return of Rob Johnson—if ye think fit, ye can write back to our uncle by him.

"With kind compliments to the laird and the bairns,

"Believe me, faithfully,

"Your very loving sister,

"JAMESINA SINCLAIR."

Having finished this epistle, she retired to take a little rest before the return of daylight permitted her to dispatch the therein named Rob Johnson, with many charges, "not to let grass grow under his feet" by the way, and promises of reward if he came soon back.

Her father's room was now put into such order, that she rather wished the servants of the family to enter, and took an opportunity

to leave the door of his counting room open, as they passed it, so that they could see his clothes, which she had dried at the fire, hanging over a chair in the place, where he usually put them off. These she thought prudent precautions, as she was aware from her brother Hugh, that some observations had been made upon Stoneyards being taken ill, just then, for the first time in his life; and a cotter's wife, even ventured to say in the kitchen, that "she feared that there was some evil coming over the family at Stoneyards, for she had the last night, when she went out late, to bed her cow, seen a light in the 'lady's room,' where light hadna been since the night after her funeral."

These reports soon spread to Kelpfield, and brought up Miss Ross to inquire for Jamesina, whom she naturally concluded must find herself in a very disagreeable situation, and as soon as they met, with the light she had already upon the subject, her penetration was at no loss to discover that things were exactly as she supposed.

Robina Ross had never felt affection for a person so different from herself as Jamesina Sinclair, but she was her mother's daughter, and that mother had been Robina's dearest friend. The families had always been intimate, and poor Mrs. Sinclair had upon her death-bed conjured Robina to continue the regard she had felt for her to her children. Could friendship have existed without esteem, Miss Ross would have felt it for Jamesina, but setting affection out of the question she certainly did feel interest in every thing which related to the family of her early friend, and would have strained every nerve to prevent sorrow and disgrace from falling upon it. She knew that the crimes committed, included both—that murder was a crime pursued by the vengeance of heaven! but with the feelings of her country, she thought that as what *was* done, could not be *un*done, all that remained was, if possible, to prevent the innocent from suffering with the guilty.

"To think that the husband of my friend

Marion M'Alpin, and the father of her children should be hanged for such a dreadful thing, however much he may deserve it, is what I cannot bear to think of—disgrace never came near their door till now—and though I must sorrow for the innocent blood that's crying from the ground, I cannot help wishing, for the sake of others, to screen him that spilt it from the punishment he deserves for more than that, though she that's away prayed that punishment might never light upon him."

With these feelings, Miss Ross, after having expressed her concern at the illness of Stoneyards, offered to remain with his daughter, and sit up at night if such attendance was necessary, as she well knew that the servants of the house were not equal to the care of an invalid. Jamesina, however, at present declined the proffered kindness, in the hope that her father would be better, and Miss Ross took leave with a strict injunction to send for her if she could be of use—she added, with an emphasis which

left her hearer no room to doubt that she knew all,—"You know, for your mother's sake, I would willingly do any thing in my power, and it is just as well to keep things amongst friends, as put ourselves in the mouth of the public at such a time."

"I well know your kindness for my poor mother," answered Jamesina, "and if he is not better to-night, I will send for you to-morrow morning." With this agreement they parted.

Jamesina had the satisfaction, in the course of the day, to see her messenger return with a satisfactory answer from Mrs. M'Askel, in the shape of an invitation for her uncle and his guests for the circuit ball, which she lost not a moment in forwarding to its destination, and soon had the additional pleasure to find it was accepted. She then sent Hugh to Fernbraes, as he was also included in Mrs. M'Askel's invitation, to tell her uncle, that as she understood from her sister, that he and his visiters were going to Long Byars, and that there was so much company in the

house that there would be no room for her, she would just stay where she was until his return, as Barbara was away, and that there was a hundred things for her to do.

Much pleased with the feasible appearance she had brought things to bear, she waited with impatience to hear that her uncle had actually set out before she sent for Dr. Wiley, and she told the servants about her, "that as her father still continued far from well, she would like to see their old doctor for her own satisfaction; but that as there was not much the matter with him she could not think of disturbing her kind uncle with it, and he busy with strange friends."

If her father recovered she could tell this story to her uncle when he came back, and if he did not she was certain he would not find fault with her then.

CHAPTE

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considerable remittance which Dr. M'Alpin had made for the purchase of some land contiguous to Fernbraes. Immediately after the old gentleman's death, Stoneyards had ordered his bed and the furniture of the apartment in which he had died to be burned upon pretence of his having died of a fever, which was considered very infectious. Amongst the condemned articles was an ancient bureau, containing a variety of papers and documents which the executor thought would be better out of the way.

Old Madge M'Lean, the doctor's nurse, had always, since the death of his mother, remained with his grandfather at Fernbraes, and she being constantly about his person in his old age, had been in the habit of seeing him deposit whatever he considered as most valuable in this bureau, and had opportunity to know that it contained papers of consequence to his grandson, as well as to be certain that there was nothing infectious in the illness which caused the old gentleman's death. She had stoutly contested the mat-

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Time passed on, and

was never made by the executor, though such large additions were made to the sheep-walks at Stoneyards, that Madge's suspicions on the subject were turned into certainty. One day when Mrs. Sinclair was regretting to the nurse that the lands of Braeton had not been purchased for her brother, though she had written to inform him as soon as they were likely to be in the market.

Madge asked—"And did ye never hear your grandfather say, mem, that he had gotten a letter from my ain dear bairn?" a name by which she always called the child of her affection. "Did ye never hear that he had a letter and money too to make the purchase? But he might have forgotten, that's true, he was so ill at the time it came."

"You must be mistaken, Madge, I never heard any thing of the kind; and if it had been the case, I would surely have known it."

"Ye'll may be think, mem, that I am taking too much upon me; but ye remember that I nursed you, and the dear bairn

that's awa, and I may speak of things to you that wadna set others."

"You have no need to call all this to my mind, Madge, for I have never forgotten your kindness to me and my dear brother, or your attachment to our house. But what have you to tell me now, that you should think it necessary to bring it to my mind?"

"I bring it to your mind because I have to speak of them whose behaviour to you I am no well pleased wi', though ye never complain."

"That is a useless subject to talk upon, Madge, and had better be left alone. Tell me what you were going to say about my brother and the letter."

"I cannot do the one without the other, for I must speak of their deeds anent this job."

"Well, well, better let it pass. I'll bear the burden that God has seen fit to lay upon me."

"And a sore one it is, that's true. But it's no to vex you, or to notice what canna

be mended," said Madge, with the liberty which her situation in the family gave her; "it's to serve your brother that I must speak now."

"Well, well, Madge, say on."

"Well, then, to tell ye the truth, I misdoubted the order for burning the things in your grandfather's room, and with your leave I took care to see what was in the black oak bureau first"—and observing that Mrs. Sinclair was going to interrupt her, "but hear me to an end. It was no for ill that I did it, but because I had good reason to think it would be for his loss—and sure enough I was right. There I found this letter," producing that already mentioned, "in his own blessed handwriting; and in it ye'll see his orders to buy the Bracton—and ye'll find, too, that he sent the money to pay for the purchase when it was made, so that wasna what prevented it. When did he ever neglect to do any thing that was right and becoming the blood that flows in his veins?"

Mrs. Sinclair took the letter, and after she had read it, found that things were just as the nurse had stated them to be, and that it was really her brother's desire to have made the purchase she so much wished for him. "Stoneyards can never have known of this letter, Madge; and it is a pity that you did not produce it to him before the lands were sold to another."

"That's all, mem, that ye ken about the matter. It wasna that he didna ken of this letter that made him burn the bureau, but that he didna want that others should ken of it. I have reason to know that he garred auld Donald Fox, the factor, draw the money, though it went for other things than that it was sent for, and many another sum forby, as thae papers will show."

Madge again produced the other budget which she had got into her possession, and which Mrs. Sinclair saw was in the handwriting of her grandfather, giving an exact statement of the ready money of which he died possessed.

"All this is very extraordinary, Madge," she said, "and must not pass in this way. It is dreadful to think that my poor brother, who has been toiling all his life under a burning sun, and banished, one may say, from all he loves best, should be stripped and plundered in this way by his nearest of kin! It is very extraordinary; but I will see into it, come of it what will. When I was the only sufferer, I thought it my duty to bear all without complaint; but no human being shall injure him if I have the power to help it. Oh! if he could but know the life I have passed since he left me—but that is a thing he must never know. And now that we are upon the subject, Madge, and that ye have heard me say more than any mortal heard me say before, for no complaint ever passed my lips, but what was made to my God—promise me, Madge, that you will never be the person to inform my brother of Stoneyards's behaviour to me."

"For your sake, mem, and for your bro-

ther's sake, what I know, will go to the grave with me."

"Well, as that is settled, let us speak of what can be done to serve my brother now. You must give me these papers, Madge, and I'll insist upon Stoneyards making restitution of such ill-got gear."

Stoneyards was at the time absent from home about the purchase of grazings which lay contiguous to his largest farm; and his poor wife, whose health was broken down by sorrow and ill treatment, suffered cruelly from the agitation of spirits caused by his protracted delay. The step she had determined upon taking was so contrary to her usual habits of meek suffering, that dread of the issue tormented her mind. She knew she had to deal with one who would not fail to use every advantage fortune had put in his power.

When he did return, she perceived, as soon as he entered, that something had occurred to please him in no common degree,

though he strove to cover his exterior satisfaction with an air of chagrin—his deceit was too clumsy to deceive even those less accustomed to observe him. Mrs. Sinclair tried to discover what had happened, but he saved her the trouble, for he had no sooner thrown aside his riding-gear, than he burst out—

"Here's a pretty story! Here's a bonny kettle of fish! What will Fernbraes say when he hears of this? And how I am to tell him is what I do not very well see."

"Tell me, first," inquired his wife, "what you are speaking about, and then I shall be the better able to answer you,"—not without a suspicion that some new plot was hatching.

"Have you not heard what is ringing through the whole country? Do ye no know that old Donald Fox is dead; and what is the worst part for us, had died a bankrupt."

"I am sorry to hear of the old man's death, for it must have been sudden; and

sorry to hear that his affairs are in such a bad state for his family; but I do not see how it can be of any consequence to my brother."

"No? when he had all his affairs in his hands—that is to say, whatever your grandfather left."

"My grandfather was not the man to leave his money in such a way; and you know, Stoneyards, and I know, that you have drawn every thing out of Donald Fox's hands that might have been there, and I can bring proof, if such is wanted."

Stoneyards at this changed colour; his face became purple with rage, and he demanded in a tone choked by passion, how she dared to know or think any thing about matters which did not belong to her.

"It does not signify, Stoneyards, how I came to know it, but I do know it; and if you do not give me your promise to do justice to my brother, but persist in imposing such a story upon him, even at the hazard of cutting off my own children from his inherit-

ance, because they are yours, I will do that sooner than let my kind and generous brother be duped and plundered by those who owe him so much."

Passion almost overcame Stoneyards at this resolute declaration, and under its influence he made a movement as if he would have annihilated the speaker on the spot where she stood; but checking himself, and clenching his teeth, he stood for a moment looking at her, and then in a voice hardly articulate from conflicting passions, desired her to consider well before she took any step, and not by her folly reduce her family to beggary.

"Ye would no like to see them reduced to that, would ye?"

"I have told you once, Stoneyards, and I tell you again that no selfish consideration of what I, or my family may suffer will make me stand tamely by, and see my liberal, my noble-minded brother robbed of his rightful inheritance."

"And is this your prudence—and is this your consideration for your family, madam?" demanded her husband, bitterly. "And if I did in my need apply a little of the money which he can well spare to my own use, must ye by your presumptuous folly bring him upon my back at a time when it would be ruin to me?"

"If that is the case, write to my brother fairly and honestly, and tell him what you have done, and I am certain that he will never trouble you about payment until it be convenient; but do not attempt to deceive him, or make him believe that what you have taken for your own purposes is lost in the hands of others."

"Ay, but it would settle the matter at once without vexation to him, or trouble to me, and I would have nothing hanging over my head to pay at another time, when it may not be more convenient than it is now, and I could sleep in peace."

"Yes, if your conscience would let you;

but mine will never let me rest under such a burden, and if you do not get rid of it by doing justice, I must."

"You have wrought yourself into such a fever about this silly business," said Stoneyards, with a malicious sneer, "that you had better go to bed now, and sleep it off if you can, and in the morning we shall see what is to be done."

"As you say, I am ill able to speak or think more on the subject; but I tell you fairly that if you do not make James acquainted with what has passed, *I* shall."

"Ye shall do nothing of the kind," muttered Stoneyards between his teeth as he went out of the room, and shut the door with a jerk after him, "if it is in the power of man to rule the will of woman, or to tie her tongue. After all there is but one way effectual, and that would be if when she went to her bed she were never to rise."

This thought had no sooner presented itself to his mind than it seemed by some

strange fascination to remain by him—he commenced to turn over the subject in his own mind.—

"Her health is so bad that her life cannot be long; it is impossible it can go beyond the next fall, and perhaps her time is much nearer. She is as thin as a skeleton, and has such a cough, that it would be only saving her longer pain to quiet it altogether; and then this fashious business would lie still with her.—I wonder," he next thought, "what is in that cough-draught that the doctor sends; I might, I dare say, without any one's kenning a word aboot it, put something there that would do the business more effectually."

With this intention he watched the arrival of the doctor's messenger, and took the phial containing the draught from the hands of the maid who had brought it up stairs, and carrying it into his own room examined the bottle and the colour of its contents. Finding that it resembled laudanum, he

threw out the draft and filled up the phial with that medicine, and then placed it where it usually stood.

What he anticipated, happened—his victim unable to sleep, called for her draft and drank off the contents of the phial without discovering the deceit. Strong convulsions followed, and her state soon became so alarming that it was evident she would not see the light of a new day. Madge M'Lean instantly despatched a messenger for the doctor, and Miss Ross, who was by the bedside of her suffering friend in time to receive her last directions. There she found Stoneyards, who seemed particularly anxious that his wife should not exert herself by attempting to speak, and often exhorted her to compose herself and try to get a little sleep.

It seemed that Mrs. Sinclair's mind was agitated by something more than her own alarming condition, and that her husband dreaded the disclosure she wanted to make more than the sudden catastrophe which

was just at hand; Madge appeared impatient of the presence and interference of Stoneyards, and even ventured to say that her mistress would be much better if he would leave off speaking to her, and that if he would go to his own room she would call him if he was wanted.

Stoneyards was deaf to her remonstrances and proposals; he did not wish to quit his ill-fated wife while speech or recollection remained, and he only repeated his wishes that she would try to get a little sleep.

"If you were to take some of the laudanum, my dear, it would perhaps compose you."

The sufferer made no answer but by an averted motion of the head.

"Laudanum, say ye?" said Madge, bitterly. "I doubt but she has had too much already. I hae seen laudanum in my day, and never saw much good come of it."

"What do you say, Madge?" inquired Robina, "surely, if she has had too much laudanum the doctor should be sent for!"

"Never heed what Madge says or thinks," interposed Stoneyards; "ye may be sure, Miss Ross, that I sent for the doctor when I saw the melancholy state that my wife, poor woman, had fallen into; but I doubt it is past his skill or any other body's to be of use to her now; but we must be resigned to afflicting dispensations when they come, Miss Robina, and nobody kens better than yourself what this is to me—nobody better kens what a wife she has been—and what a mother—but we mauna repine, we mauna repine."

Stoneyards had taken the opportunity of old Madge's absence from the room to make this profession of his resignation. Robina, who saw that her friend's sufferings were increased by the mistake Madge had mentioned, left the room in the intention of sending Hugh to bring instant assistance to his mother. As she did so, the old woman returned with the laudanum-bottle in her hand, which she held up to Stoneyards saying, with a look of keen scrutiny, "This

bottle was full to the brim yesterday, as I had good reason to know, but see till it now—it's half empty and more—there is enough out of it to explain all this."

"As ye say, Madge," answered Stoneyards, with imperturbable effrontery, "there is too much out of that bottle, and I fear there is some mistake, though how it should come to pass is more than I can guess."

"But I can guess right well," answered Madge, fixing her sharp keen eyes upon her master—or rather her mistress's husband, as she always called him, "I can guess right well, and it were well if the sheriff heard of it."

Stoneyards turned to an ashy paleness, though he opened his mouth to protest his ignorance of her meaning—at the same time his wife held up her hand, and made a signal for silence, while she said in a feeble tone,

"Madge, for the love you bear to me and mine, never let such a word pass your lips, or such a thought enter your heart. What

is past cannot be recalled, and my children must have one parent when they have lost the other. Madge give me your promise that this goes no further, that I may die in peace; and I call upon you to witness that I forgive whatever has been done against me, as I hope to receive forgiveness."

"And am I to see you murdered before my face?" answered the indignant old woman. "And am I to see my dear bairn plundered and robbed in his rightful patrimony, and no say that ill has been done? And am I to see the root and branch of my auld and honourable master's family laid in the dust? and am I to tie my tongue and uphaud them that did it? It's no in human nature, and it's no in mine."

"Madge M'Lean, you never refused my request, and you will not do so now—it is the last that I shall ever make to you—think of my children, you are not the person that would try to bring infamy upon their name. Promise me, that for their sake

and for my sake this will never go further, and Stoneyards will promise to restore to my dear brother what is his lawful right—promise both before I quit this world, and keep the promise ye make, as ye look for peace here, or happiness hereafter."

The promises thus solemnly required were reluctantly given, and Mrs. Sinclair, exhausted by the effort she had made, sank back upon her pillow, sensible that her end was approaching; she desired that her children should be brought to her, and that she should be left alone with them. Stoneyards now satisfied that no confession to his prejudice would be made, was glad to quit a scene of patient suffering which touched even his hard heart with a feeling something like remorse.

Robina Ross watched by her poor friend while life remained, and readily gave the promise Mrs. Sinclair required, to assist and direct her children after life was gone. "You will be a mother to them, Robina,

if they should ever need your care, and to the keeping of the God of Love and Mercy, to whom I am going, I commit you and them."

CHAPTER VIII.

Foul whisperings are abroad; unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles.

MACBETH.

STONEYARDS was not without hope that he might be able to enjoy the fruit of a crime, which the death of his wife, and the promise she had exacted from Madge M'Lean, who was alone acquainted with the dreadful secret, would bury in obscurity; and he had afterwards the effrontery, when talking with Madge, to affect to consider all which had passed at that time as the effect of delirium in the mind of his wife, and his passive acquiescence as an act of soothing compassion due to her distracted state.

Robina was but imperfectly acquainted with the circumstance which had led to the extraordinary kind of anxiety Stonyards had manifested to prevent his wife from speaking, when she had first been called to her bedside, and rather guessed than knew the motives by which he was actuated; but she had seen enough to raise suspicions, and to increase, if possible, the dislike which she had always felt for the selfish and coarse habits of her poor friend's husband. She well knew that Mrs. Sinclair's life had been for years a scene of bitter trial, though it was a subject upon which she had never complained, even to her own mother, and now Robina could little bear Mr. Sinclair's professions of resignation, and still more hypocritical professions of sorrow. She suspected that his unjust dealings by his brother-in-law had been the means of shortening the life of his poor wife; but as her friend had said any inquiry into the case would only be to cover her family with disgrace, Robina resolved, that no hint to

their disparagement should pass her lips, or, if she could help it, no outward action of hers betray her inward feelings.

She was keenly alive to the sentiments of her country regarding family respectability; and though a good and a pious woman, thought it no harm to practise a little of the jesuitical casuistry which upholds the respectability of family connexions, even at the expense of truth. Robina Ross would not have been guilty of falsehood for her own benefit, had her life depended upon its success; but to prevent talking about what would be injurious to the family of her beloved friend, and cause the innocent to suffer for the guilty, and bring odium upon an ancient and honourable name, was in her view of the matter quite another affair.

Old Madge M'Lean was better instructed in what had taken place, and even possessed proofs which she could bring into a court of justice if need were, but she resolved in conformity to her promise to her dying

mistress only to use them as instruments to force Stoneyards into compliance with his part of the agreement. She hated the man—and perhaps felt a sort of triumph in having such check over him; but with the prudence peculiar to her character and country, she resolved to keep her own counsel, and take none into her secret unless such assistance was indispensable to compel Stoneyards to the restitution of embezzled property, she was determined he should make. With this intent, after the death of Mrs. Sinclair, Madge made no further comments even to Miss Robina Ross, who remained at the house until the last duties were paid to the companion of her youth. The old woman, with her own hands, laid out the body, and then called upon Stoneyards "to look on his work—and as sure as she lies there," she continued, "nothing but your restoring to Fernbraes what ye have unjustly kept from him, will prevent me from making this known to them that will see justice done. I have that in my power which will

make that which passed in darkness, as clear as noonday."

Stoneyards again renewed his promise, frightened by a threat which he knew could be put into execution; firmly resolved, however, at the time he did so, to find means to evade its performance.—"After doing so much, it will be hard," he thought, "if I am obliged to stop now."

It was observed from that day, that old Madge M'Lean had an extraordinary influence upon Stoneyards, and that a word from her could rule him when none other dare to come near him. "She maun be a witch indeed to manage the like of him," said the servants—"the muckle-horned deil himsel, is no more camsterie than him in his tantrums." It was also observed about the house, "that auld Madge read written papers, and that too, at unco hours of the night; and that she was once seen with pen and ink in her hand, writing something which she hid the first moment that any one looked at her—no very good signs as

every body knew—she spoke to herself—or may be to them that wadna gie an answer in other folk's hearing—and wi' a word she garred the laird be still when he was raging about like a roaring lion, and she made him write in his counting-room, as it was plain to see, often against his will."

But from all these usurpations and strange ways, the house of Stoneyards was suddenly delivered. Old Madge went one day to the tryste of Drumillar at twenty miles distance, and never came home. She was to have gone to her sister's, but there she never arrived. What had become of her none could ever learn. The servants, and by their account, the neighbours, were disposed as the most reasonable and probable opinion to think, "that she had just taken a trip on a broomstick across the seas, to some of her old haunts, for it was weel-kenned that she was over far-travelled, and ower book-learned for any honest woman; and every body knew that the like of her, had their own ways of

ganging and coming, no like the rest of the warld."

This solution was so satisfactory, that after waiting, and wandering, and conjecturing, old Madge shared the fate which awaits even those who occupy most of the public attention, and was gradually forgotten, notwithstanding her son's diligent search to discover what had become of her. Even he was at last forced to believe, that she had been drowned crossing a small arm of the sea which lay in her route. The servants found a new subject of surprise, when, on Duncan's inspecting the little property and moveables his mother had left behind her, no written papers were to be found,—a circumstance only to be reconciled with her late studies by the very probable notion, "that she had been called upon to deliver these writings to them wha sudna be named."

"Preserve us, sirs! is na it fearful to think of an auld crature like that, working for sick

maisters, and crossing the seas to do their bidding; it gars a very body's blood rin cald to think of a' the words and the names that were in yon writings; but the deil and the pope they maun hae their ain agents, and them that serves the one or the tither of them daurna bide for time nor tide."

Stoneyards fully acquiesced in all these opinions, and thought that "the absence of such a 'dour wife' was no bad riddance."

After the old woman's disappearance, and after the commotion it excited had subsided, things went on in the old uniform way, only Stoneyards increased his stock, and had the reputation of being one of the richest men in the country. For though his wealth increased, he never increased his expenses. In this way years ran round until the return of the laird of Fernbraes to take possession of his family estate, in all the added dignity of oriental fortune.

Suddenly, as we have already seen, old Madge again made her appearance in her daughter's cottage at the Red Sheugh, and

as suddenly vanished without having had opportunity to explain to Fernbraes al any of the particulars of what had happe in his absence. We already know trouble caused by this second disappearar and the catastrophe to which it led, which now Jamesina thought was likely come to a fatal termination for the house Stoneyards. Could she but prevent public exposure of what had been done, crimes themselves, or the death of her fath seemed but a trifle in comparison. She present fancied that his death would cover all, and shrunk from the idea of shame his body's being refused Chri burial, as a murderer, would bring every one connected with him.

CHAPTER IX.

As soon as Jamesina received information of the departure of her uncle and his friends upon their visit to Long Byars, she despatched a trusty messenger to the next borough town for her old medical attendant Dr. Wiley, as it was evident that her father's illness was now assuming a very serious aspect, and that without surgical assistance for his wound, all that she could do would prove fruitless. She dared not commit to writing the necessity there was for the doctor's instant presence, but gave

her messenger charge upon charge not to return without him.

After waiting for several hours in a state of increasing anxiety, she had the mortification to find that the doctor had been called to a distant part of the country before her summons arrived, and that there was no chance of his return until the following night, if he came then. In these perplexing circumstances Jamesina was forced to have recourse to the proffered kindness of Miss Ross, to whom she accordingly sent an earnest entreaty for her speedy presence. She felt that some explanation was due to Robina, and she tasked all her address to make it in the way most advantageous for her father. She dwelt much upon his misfortune in meeting with Duncan, and in his having been in self-defence compelled to act as he did. "Witness the dreadful wound which he had received, which threatened," as she told Miss Ross, "to be the death of him."

"Let us not speak of the crime, Jamesina, nor if possible think of it, unless it be to pray God that before he takes your father from this world, he would give him grace to repent what he has done. Nothing would make me act the part I am doing, but to save the husband of my friend Marion M'Alpin from being hanged for murder. I cannot bear to think of the stain, the disgrace and the ruin, this black business would bring upon her family if it came to light; and for that reason I will try to do what is in my power; but do not try, Jamesina, to justify what has been done, and never can be undone. Nothing, as I said before, would make me do as I am doing, but the honour and respectability of an ancient family, which must not be lost because it has the misfortune to be connected with him."

"It is a thought like my mother's friend," said Jamesina, "and one she would thank you for, if she were here to speak for her-

self. And your favourite too, Robina, my brother Malcolm, who is the soul of honour and spirit, as I have often heard you say, would never hold up his head after such a stain as this."

Miss Jamesina felt the prudence of bringing his name to the recollection of her coadjutrice, knowing that what regarded his wellbeing would determine her to proceed, however painful she might find it. "Neither Fernbraes or my dear Malcolm must ever know of this, nor ever shall if I can be the means of preventing it."

Jamesina then explained the causes of severe alarm which she had on her father's account. She began to think that she had ventured too much in running the risk of letting him die for want of medical aid, and feared that the part she had taken in the whole matter would ultimately embroil her with her uncle.

"Though after all, what could I do?" she continued; "my uncle, with his head-

strong notions of right and wrong would never, I doubt, have been brought by any reason upon earth to do what I wanted in a quiet way, and I was forced to keep it from him, end how it will."

"It would be more tormenting to his kind heart," said Miss Ross, "than you know of, Jamesina, therefore he must never come to the knowledge of this. The dead cannot benefit by what the living would suffer."

It was in this way that the worthy Robina Ross schooled herself into the performance of a part, which, with all its attendant circumstances of concealment and management, she would certainly in any other case, have considered as going "art and part" with the guilty.

Jamesina, in her statement, wholly suppressed the account of her own midnight rencounter, and the means she had taken to cleanse her father's habiliments from the dreadful witness she had found upon them; and Miss Ross, who did not wish to retrace

the horrid circumstance, never inquired.

The two ladies ascended to the apartment of the miserable culprit, and found him, in the delirium of fever, muttering words which would have betrayed his part in the late proceeding to any one within hearing of their import.

Tormented by the goadings of his own evil conscience, he made desperate efforts to escape from the fiends whom he fancied were fastening upon him, and often struck with such violence at those whom he believed to be within reach, that the bed shook under his frantic efforts, and large drops of perspiration chased each other down his inflamed features.

To witness his desperation was an effort beyond Robina's strength, and she retired into an adjoining apartment, promising to watch that no person came up stairs while his fearful paroxysm continued.

Jamesina, whose harder strung nerves fitted her to endure all that did not include

personal suffering, remained in his room; but seated herself in a corner out of his sight, as she observed that the presence of any one only exasperated his mind, and she quietly waited the exhaustion which she knew must follow such wearing exertion of body and mind.

For hours did Stoneyards continue to rave on in the same frantic manner, the violence of fever supplying his want of strength, and in a manner rendering him insensible to the acute pain of his wound, irritated by his fruitless attempts to escape from what he considered his place of punishment.

"What!" he said, thrusting out his huge brawny arm, on which the muscles were as strongly marked as on that of a blacksmith accustomed to wield the sledge-hammer,—"What has this right hand done that I should have such a pain in it, and what has my brain conceived that it should burn as if the flames of hell were there?"

He struck his forehead violently with

his clenched hand, and tearing off the handkerchief which bound his head, showed his gray hair in melancholy contrast to his bloated countenance and glaring eyeballs. Even Jamesina's heart shrunk when he violently drew back his dark-blue curtains and exposed features working with every evil passion, like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. She hastily cast a shawl over her head, and drew herself further back into her corner to escape the hideous sight.

He raved of her mother—of Madge and of Duncan, and Jamesina was now convinced that another crime had been committed, of which she was until then ignorant, and no longer wondered at the uncommon agitation he had shown on catching a glance of her as she escaped into the apartment of her mother. But she was his *own* child—self-interest was her governing principle, and though she was frightened by such a disclosure, she was not to be daunted in the path she had marked out

for herself, though at the moment she was thankful that Robina was not within hearing.

This violent access of fever past, left the wretched sufferer in a state of exhaustion which resembled death; the colour which violent irritation had inflamed to a crimson and purple tint, now ebbed from his stiffening features, and was succeeded by the clayey hue of suspending animation. He still breathed, but his eyes were closed and his hands fell by his side; then his respiration became so very low that Jamesina went in quest of Miss Ross, thinking for a moment that it was finally suspended. That, however, was not the case, but it was plain to them both that the next return of fever would be the last.

"Could we not send for the minister?" inquired Robina, "worthy Mr. Playfair would, I am sure, give his word that this should go no further."

"But it is useless now, Robina, he is past speaking, and if speech does return it will

no be with reason. There is no good in bringing Mr. Playfair here; but I think I had better send a line to my uncle and my sister, that he is taken suddenly ill, as it will have an odd appearance if he dies without their being informed of his sickness, and I really think it will be all over before my uncle can come here, so that it will be the safest in every way."

Miss Ross made no objection to what seemed so highly probable, but she earnestly wished for the presence of the minister—she was not without a tincture of superstitious dread at the idea of being without the support of a man of his sacred character at the time when such a soul as that of Stoneyards quitted its earthly tenement,—not knowing, as she thought, what sorts of spirits might be in waiting for that time.

She recollected with a shudder that she had heard old Madge tell of a "man who after having led a very wicked life, lay on a deathbed like Stoneyards, and that the

strangest noises were heard about the house at midnight; just at the moment the breath quitted the body, a blast of wind blew open every door in the house, and put out every candle; that a noise of crackling was heard as if something was ground to powder, and that when light was procured, every bone in the dead man's body was smashed to atoms."

At another time Robina would not have laid much stress upon the truth of this history, knowing the taste of her country for the marvellous; but now that her nerves were shaken by crimes which had passed under her own eyes, and that she felt her mind troubled by the sort of connivance she had given to them,—this, and many a similar tradition, which she had been accustomed to hear from her youth, presented themselves to her mind, with the force which every belief is always ready to usurp over weakened reason.

The certainty of a death was before her, which even her utmost charity could not

conceal from her was unblessed; and at such a moment she would have given much for the society of any one upon whose religious feelings she could place dependence. She felt more forcibly than she had ever done before, that Jamesina was not the person. "She has no thought but for the goods of this world—she lives but for its opinion and its honour, and if she can come out of this trouble without injury to herself in any of these things, she neither thinks nor cares for the poor sinner who is going to judgment without repentance and without forgiveness."

Overcome with this conviction she burst into tears, and retired for a time to pour out on her knees the supplications which no human ear could hear, and which no human might could answer. She feared that she had done wrong in the sight of God,—she feared that in saving the murderer from the broken law, she had but smoothed his road to eternal destruction, and she prayed for guiding grace, and for the assistance of God's

Holy Spirit to direct her in the path she must tread. She felt that the time was now passed when any action of hers could affect the wretched being, for whom she feared she had incurred guilt, and she again took her seat near him and watched by his distracted slumbers in a state of mind which it would be difficult to describe.

With his daughter it was different. Her sole interest was to preserve the silence so material to herself; and so long as there seemed a prospect of being enabled to do that by any means whatever, the rest was to her comparatively immaterial.

With the uncommon share of prudent forethought which had always marked the conduct of Miss Jamesina Sinclair from her youth upwards, and which every year as it passed brought to greater maturity, she considered that in the present desperate state of family affairs, it would be wiser for her to see how matters stood for her own interest, and to try if it were not possible to arrange them more to her satisfaction than she sus-

pected was likely to be done by her eldest brother. She was well convinced that he would do nothing more than law compelled him; self was the ruling principle in his mind, if any thing in his composition deserved to be dignified by such a name. He had all the ignorance and coarseness of his father, without any particle of his sagacity. Willing, therefore, to be beforehand with him, she left Miss Robina by the invalid, and taking up a candle repaired to his private apartment, having first possessed herself of the keys which her father always kept under his pillow. Carefully shutting the door she proceeded to examine his drawers and private repositories, in which she discovered a considerable sum in gold and notes, probably the produce of his transactions with the butchers and sheep-dealers on the day of old Madge's disappearance.

Having particularly inspected the papers and finding that there was no record of this gold amongst them, she thought she might venture to remove it for her own use, and

also the small notes; those of larger amount might, she thought, be registered, and probably traced; it would therefore be more safe not to meddle with them, and by pleasing her brother with the possession of such a large sum, keep him in good humour, and prevent the inquiries which he would certainly make if there was nothing forthcoming.

"I have earned this," she thought, "by all that I have done for his honour and credit. It would be long ere he could do as much for himself, or any one else."

She was certain Hugh could not be acquainted with the amount of what ought to be left by her father, as she knew that he never spoke of his money transactions to any one, and was accustomed, as often as his son asked for money, "to wonder where he expected to find it, knowing that he never kept a shilling more than was requisite for the maintenance of an idle wasteful family, who put every thing out, but never brought any thing in." Besides, the people who had

bought these large flocks of sheep of her father were, by the greatest luck in the world, south-country dealers, and consequently could not be there to answer any questions, even if it ever came into Hugh's thick head to make them.

Satisfied, from all these considerations, that her contemptible felony would remain a secret, she locked up every thing as she found it, with the exception of the well-filled bag, which she carried to her own apartment, and deposited safely in a private receptacle, where she had always been in the habit of lodging such little savings and pickings as her own industry and good management put in her way. Sundry little surpluses of dairy and store-room, converted into yellow gold, had been hidden in this snug depository, until she found means to place them, by the agency of decent Mr. Shiftwell, old Donald Fox's head-clerk, out on interest.

Jamesina would have given a great deal to have seen her present treasure deposited

safely in his hands; but the present was not a time to bring him or any other body about the house, and she was obliged to conceal the money, and the anxiety it cost her, by going back to the bedside of her miserable parent.

The young laird from time to time made his appearance in the room when his sister thought it safe to admit him; but as such attendance was uncongenial to his habits and feelings, he never lengthened his visits beyond the time, which was by decency required, to ask how his father found himself.

In the low fits of her patient's fever, Jamesina also required, on different pretences, the presence of all the servants about the house, and would even let any of the neighbours who called to inquire for him, come up to his room; but when the return of fever and delirium made such witnesses dangerous, she resolutely kept them out of the way, saying that the presence of strangers only induced him to fatigue himself by talking.

Notwithstanding all these precautions,—

and she left nothing undone that worldly wisdom could suggest,—it was impossible that such an illness, at such a time, should pass without comment; and some of the neighbours, who were not obliged to Stoneyards's good offices, often "wished that all might be well, and that some things might no lie heavier on some people's consciences, than a meal of illdressed meat on their stomachs."

All these rumours and conjectures were, however, hushed by the death of their object. He expired during the night in the presence of his household, and worn out by what had already passed, without a struggle. In the morning Jamesina sent for two of the wives of old tenants of her grandfather, to whom she committed the care of the body, having first exacted a promise, upon oath, that they would never reveal the illness of which he died. This request she backed by a suitable present from her golden store. It grieved her to be under the necessity of breaking upon "an even sum," though prudence forced covetousness to confess, that it was

well spent as the seal of such an important transaction. "Had she but thought of this plan before, it would have saved her a great deal of needless torment when she first found that he could not recover, and feared discovery in consequence."

Satisfied now that all would be buried in his grave, she made preparations for the funeral with all becoming dignity. "Her brother Hugh," she told Robina, "was too much of a fool to be intrusted with any thing, even though it so materially affected his own honour and credit in the world, and she was determined that as he did not seem to have seen what had passed before his face, he should not, at all events, come to the knowledge of it by hearing."

Miss Ross, finding that Jamesina's mind was now relieved from all difficulties, and that she was quite equal to the discharge of the duties required of her, did not think it necessary to remain longer in a place where she suffered more than she thought herself called upon to bear, from witnessing the

heartless cupidity of one child, wholly occupied with what had become his, and the cold indifference of the other, but poorly concealed under the veil of hypocritical sorrow, with which she attempted to cover it. She, therefore, took her departure, and retired to her own solitary home to meditate at leisure upon what had passed.

Fernbraes had instantly, upon the receipt of his niece's note, mounted his horse to give her an answer in person, and arrived at Stoneyards just as the young laird was, with the assistance of the late Donald Foxe's clerks, sending out letters of invitation for the funeral. Her uncle was as much shocked as surprised when he heard the sudden termination of an illness which he had been taught to consider as of a nature too slight to require his assistance. "How is it, Jamesina," he inquired, "that ye did not send before, or how is it that ye did not tell me your father was ill before I went upon this unlucky visit?"

"My dear uncle," replied Jamesina, "I

never, no more than any other person, thought that the sore head he complained of was any thing else than a headach, which sleep would take away; and even though he was no better the day ye went, but rather worse, I did not think it worth while to disturb you in the company of your friends, as he himself told me it was nothing, and I knew that he was a strong man, and never had any sickness in his life, I could no dream of this, and I could no bring myself to think that there was any thing in it till the time that I wrote to you; and then, though I had given him all the things that the "Domestic Medicine" recommends, a great book of my dear mother's, I saw that he was really sick, and I thought it best to send for you without losing another minute—Oh! that I had done it before, but I did all for the best; but your presence was a blessing that I was not fated to have in my utmost need!"

Here the speaker thought proper to make such a show of violent sorrow that her uncle advised her not to distress herself about

what could not be helped, but rather to try and get a little rest after all the fatigue she must have suffered.

Jamesina did not here forget to tell her uncle that their kind friend, Miss Robina, had been with her all the time,—a communication which she saw was agreeable, satisfied by any means to turn her uncle from inquiries which she could not answer. She had such dependance upon his kindness as to be certain that if she appeared overcome with fatigue and suffering, he would cease to harass her with questions, and, in fact, she had suffered both in body and mind, though not from the feelings which she chose to assign. Her uncle, therefore, found no difficulty in persuading her to retire to her own apartment, satisfied that her two confidants would keep vigilant watch, while he, after having seen her there, returned to his own house, where his Lucknow friends were to follow him, as he had left Long Byars the instant he had received his niece's note, and ridden as fast as his horse could carry him.

Stoneyards had died without a will, consequently the whole of his property, with the exception of a trifle which by their mother's marriage settlement had been secured to the younger children, went to the eldest son.

When Jamesina had, by her uncle's desire, and her own inclination to be alone, retreated to her apartment, her active brain was in too great a state of fermentation to permit her to sleep, and she passed all the late events in review before her. "Since things were to be so," she thought, "it was no in nature that they could have happened so fortunately. Every thing had taken place just as if she had had the ordering of it."

Nothing could be more lucky than Kelpfield's being out of the way at such a time; before he came back the whole would be at an end, and the neighbours weary of speaking. She would then have nothing to do but to attend to him; and if, as he had given her to understand, he was glad at the

prospect of her brother Malcolm's return, —though, after what had happened before their eyes, who would count upon any body's life, much less a sailor's at the sea?— she might then bring all her schemes to a favourable issue, and keep Farquhar Shiftwell in his own place; "for, presuming upon his knowledge, he had," she thought, "seemed to have forgotten it lately."

"It's very provoking that I cannot do without him about this money; and he is so sharp, and knows so much already, and this sum is so big, that he'll have his own thoughts. At all events I'll let it lie over until Murdoch returns, and if it is Mr. Ross of Kelpfield that puts it into his hands, he'll no dare speak nor think about it."

CHAPTER X.

Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder!

MACBETH.

Still overhead
The mingling tempest weaves its gloom, and still
The deluge deepens.

THOMSON.

THE day of the funeral was dark and gloomy. Every appearance foretold a gathering storm, the more disagreeable as the burying-ground was at some miles from Stoneyards, and many of the company had come from a considerable distance. They

were all to dine before setting forth to lodge the "laird, honest man," amongst his ancestors. His "kith and kin," to the tenth generation, or perhaps further, were now collected, not to speak of the late reports which had been in circulation, but to celebrate the virtues of the deceased, first, in old port, of which every one allowed that he had been an excellent judge, and then in whisky-punch, until the object of their meeting was almost "clean forgotten," and by none more than his worthy successor, Hugh, who had drunk so many bumpers in acknowledgment of the civilities conferred upon him and his house, and in honour of the memory of his late excellent father, whom the "Laird of Scrimpy Knowes" wished he might resemble, that it was not until he had been two or three times reminded of the lateness of the hour, by messages from his uncle, that with the assistance of two of his cousins, who grieved to see him so overcome with grief, he staggered to the gate, and took his place as chief

mourner in the sorrowful procession which now began to reel from the house.

Fernbraes and Colonel Cheapstow had witnessed this dinner, an unwonted sight to both; but not thinking it necessary to await the termination, which did not seem to be at hand, they had, on the "removal of the cloth," withdrawn from a party who seemed to feel their presence a restraint, upon pretence of inquiring for the ladies of the family.

Here Jamesina shone pre-eminent. Her sisters, to be sure, had their share of the affliction, but she had been the chief actor, and was therefore the person to be principally considered on the present occasion. All the ancient female relatives of the family had met to assist and console her, whose conduct they unanimously declared "was a *pattron* to young women, and that he would be a lucky man who should be rewarded by such a wife."

Jamesina "bore her honours meekly," and "only sorrowed that her poor exertions

should have been called for in such a way, and that her sma' endeavours had no a more happy conclusion. She had done nothing but her duty to the best, and the kindest, of fathers, and she would do it to the end, whatever it might cost her."

In the mean time she did not forget to help about the cake and sweet wine, to the "kind friends who had come so far to comfort her; and she wished," shaking out her broad hemmed cambric handkerchief, "that they might never have experience of what she suffered;" though she "confessed, that in the midst of her sorrow it was a pride and a pleasure, if any thing could give her pleasure at such a time, to see so many respectable friends of her own family, met to help her in her trouble, and honour him that was taken from them."

The ladies all rose to witness from a window, the departure of "as bonny a burial," old Miss Nelly Sinclair declared, "as any one could wish to see; and the old Lady Druma'thing gave it as her opinion, that

" though she had always thought the young laird one of the prettiest men in the country, she had never thought him so much so as just at that moment when he was stanning at his father's head."

The cavalcade passed on with as much order as the nature of circumstances would permit, though several of the sorrowing assistants had so much difficulty in keeping up with it, that the younger part of the company above stairs, who from behind a window-curtain witnessed their mazy progression, could hardly suppress an indecorous smile; conscious, however, of the impropriety of such an indulgence they resisted the inclination, and before it had 'got further than the corners of their mouths, buried it in their pocket-handkerchiefs, and more effectually to assist them, the old ladies turned the conversation upon the will of the deceased. It was a subject, however, upon which none of his daughters were either able or willing to throw any light. " They depended upon the well-known kindness of their father, and

the generosity of their brother," and Jamesina " had no doubt that every thing that ought to be done was done."

The last of the procession had disappeared, and the clouds which the whole morning had seemed gathering for a storm, now began to emit signs of its approach, the wind rose with fury, and the distant thunder growled upon the blast, then the lightning in quickened succession showed that it rolled nearer. The funeral company struggled against the opposing elements, and continued to force their way up the glen, at the head of which was situated the churchyard to which they were going in defiance of the wind, which rushed through the narrow valley full in their faces. Hats, bonnets, and plaids, yielded to the force of the blast, and the pall was even lifted from the coffin, and wrapped by the violence of the wind round the head of the young laird, an omen which most of the company witnessed with terror. Those nearest hastened to disengage him from the disagreeable encumbrance,

which they in vain strove to replace in its proper situation.

In the midst of this tempest, guns were heard from the sea, and Fernbraes, certain that they must be those of some ship embayed upon that rocky coast, urged forward the bearers (who could hardly make head against the wind's increasing fury) as fast as possible, impatient to be free to render the assistance of which he feared they stood so much in need. Exhausted by their efforts, though as many men as could get hold of the bier lent their assistance, and baffled by the violence of the wind, they more than once fell under their burden, the bier was wrenched from their hands, and the coffin overturned upon the ground.

"This is one of the awfullest days in the memory of man," said Rory Mohr, as he helped to replace Stoneyards on the bier from which he had been hurled; "that thing was dragged out of my hands wi' a wrench as a strong man wad break a rash from a bairn. His presence be about us! and the wind

CHAPTER XI.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven;
And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek
It would not stain an Angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

FERNBRAES, with the servants, tenants, and fishermen who had attended the funeral, took the short cut across the side of the glen down to the sea, losing every recollection of him whose unchristian burial they had just witnessed, in anxiety for the fate of those before them.

man in the country considered as a true shoot of the old stock, as well as anxious to render the assistance which they were sure was much wanted, they renewed their exertions, and after a hard struggle against the weather reached the top of the glen, which commanded a view of the sea through an opening in the rocks by which it was bounded.

A ship was distinctly seen in a very hazardous situation, between the outer reef which was now under water, and the inner, called the Black Rocks; she seemed to have dropped all her anchors to prevent if possible her going on shore, but it was clear from the guns she continued to fire that those on board agreed in opinion with those on shore, that in such ground it would be impossible to hold, and that in a very short time the cables must yield to the rocks upon which they were sawing.

Fernbraes gave orders that only as many men as were required to assist in laying Stoneyards in the earth, should remain with him, and that the rest should repair to the

beside, with ropes and whatever else might be necessary to assist those in peril, promising that as soon as his present duty was performed, he should follow them with the rest. This command was cheerfully obeyed by all his own people, who were much more ready to yield what assistance was in their power, than to stay and witness what was to come of this unblessed funeral.

The body was no sooner lowered into the grave than it was covered by earth and sand heaped upon it by the wind, while the next moment swept it off, and left the coffin bare, and it was not without much exertion that soil enough could be accumulated to hide it from the eyes of those who almost expected to see it get up and stand on end.

When the task was accomplished, and stones were laid down to protect the loose sand from the violence of the tempest in that exposed situation, every one left the spot, glad even of the prospect of present danger to turn their thoughts from a subject which had more or less affected every one present.

As they had anticipated, the vessel parted one of her cables and swung round by her bows in wild circuit; her deck, now distinctly seen notwithstanding the gathering twilight of a stormy night, was covered with men all seemingly watching the dread moment, when the breaking of their single remaining stay would cast them in fragments on the shore. To launch a boat to their assistance was impracticable from the state of the weather, but the hardy fishermen hasted to provide whatever they thought might be useful.

Their suspense was not of long duration—a furious blast rolling a tremendous surge before it, heaved the vessel on its foaming head—their only remaining hope—their last cable parted, and the ship whose keel almost seemed to start out of water, shot forward on the breast of the wave, like a mighty animal making a desperate leap, and thundered down on the extremity of the rocky reef in a thousand atoms. The change was as instantaneous as it was awful—an instant before the

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Many of the relations of the family had come from considerable distances, and were therefore obliged to return to their own homes before darkness increased the danger of the road in such weather; and Hugh Sinclair was too much overcome by his exertions and dinner together to be of the least use; his uncle, therefore, advised his returning to take care of his sisters and satisfying them that no accident had happened.

CHAPTER XI.

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gallant vessel had come forward in magnitude and force which seemed to defy opposition. Now she lay a mass of floating shapeless fragments hurled on the coast. The shrieks of the sufferers were lost in the thunder of her dissolution which left not two planks joined together.

To disentangle the seamen from the wreck with which they were overpowered was the first care of those who stood ready to yield their assistance as soon as it would be available; those who were thrown near enough to the shore to be within reach were instantly drawn up before the returning surge could sweep them back. The fishermen, perfectly acquainted with the rocks, searched along the cliffs, and into every corner where they thought the surf could have washed up a human being.

Fernbraes, in anticipation of what was likely to happen, had, at the commencement despatched a special messenger to Mrs. Corbat desiring that she would take care to send all the carts in the yard with straw, and blankets,

and as soon as they arrived he caused the wounded sufferers to be placed in them. Fortunately the storm had now spent its fury, and the decreasing violence of the surf permitted greater exertion to be made for the rescue of those who were still missing. The captain of the vessel was amongst those who had been thrown upon a sandbank, whence he was drawn without injury, and now actively assisted in the endeavours that were making to collect his people, and ascertain how many yet were wanting. Two only were actually dead, though many were so severely mutilated that their lives were in danger.

Dr. M'Alpin stood by the vehicles to see the wounded properly placed as they were brought up; "This seems to be a gentleman and an officer," he observed to Hugh Glass and Rory Mohr as they carried up the body of a man between them.

"It's like he may, sir; but whatever he is, I fear he has gotten his death-cleek on the rocks."

"I trust not," said the doctor, examining a large wound near his temple which bled profusely—"he is only stunned by the blow, and will, I hope, soon be able to answer for himself—put him into that litter and let him instantly be conveyed to Fernbraes.—Captain," he continued addressing the commander of the vessel. "Can you tell me if we have all your men here now? as the sooner we get some of them into a place of rest the better. How many passengers had you?"

"Three," answered the captain.

"I hope there are none of your fine fellows lost."

"No," replied the commander, after inspecting the carts, and speaking with those who were wringing their clothes on the beach—"none but the two killed, and a passenger, Lieutenant Sinclair of his Majesty's Navy who is missing."

"Sinclair!" shouted the doctor in a voice which electrified every one present—"not Lieutenant Malcolm Sinclair?"

"The same, I take it, sir, lately returned from St. Helena."

"Hear me, men of Fernbraes!" said the doctor, "Malcolm Sinclair is missing this night, and if there is one hears me that ever loved the name of M'Alpin, help me to recover my sister's son!"

Fernbraes in agony of mind returned to the foot of the rocks; while the bold fishers regardless of personal danger, for the youth whom they all knew and loved, dragged down a boat and launched her in the surf.

"Stay, Fernbraes, stay," said Rory Mohr, as his master attempted to go into the boat. "What are you going to do? let me take that place, and dinna run the risk of our losing two at once."

Colonel Cheapstow had, with Niel Ronaldson, taken the way to the extremity of the reef; every spot was examined, every fragment of the wreck was overturned, but without effect.

"Sinclair!" shouted the colonel, but they received no answer.

A flash of lightning at that moment discovered an insulated rock at some distance, on which they plainly perceived the figure of a man. "There is Sinclair!" cried Colonel Cheapstow to his friend—"I know him in this light."

"God be praised!" exclaimed his uncle—"he is safe!"

The whole party joined to raise a shout together, which it seemed reached his ears, for the next flash discovered that he made a gesture in answer. The wind had now fallen so much that the fishermen thought they could without danger go to the rock upon which he was, and his uncle relieved from anxiety on his account, remembered those whose state required his assistance.

"Now that he is in safety, Cheapstow, for I can see from his action my boy is unhurt, I shall follow the wounded, and leave you to bring him home."

"Right, my good friend. I give you my word to bring him back in safety."

"There is not a man here that would not

sooner lay down his own life than that harm should come to a hair of his head," said half a dozen voices speaking at once.

"God bless you my friends," said the doctor, mounting his horse, "do your duty, and let me do mine."

In his own avenue he overtook the litter upon which the wounded officer was conveyed, who, as he had prophesied, had, in some degree recovered from the stunning effects of the blow he had received upon the rocks. Intimation of what had happened had preceded the sufferers to Fernbraes, where preparation had been made to receive them, and a large barn arranged for the seamen.

As soon as they reached the door, Mrs. Cheapstow and Eleonora came down to render their assistance; Fernbraes explained in a few words what had happened, but did not mention his nephew. "Here, Eleonora," he said, "watch by this gentleman who is severely, but not dangerously wounded, whilst I go into the house to get a cordial to coun-

teract the faintness which loss of blood has brought upon him before we move him."

Eleonora, as she was bid, took her watchful stand by the litter, and one of the people holding up a light threw a ray on her face as she was bending down to see if her charge had fainted; he opened his eyes and fixed them with earnest gaze upon her.

Eleonora drew back abashed—"Who are you?" he asked in a faint voice, "and whence do you come?"

Startled by the seriousness of the question, she answered frankly, "I am Eleonora Cheapstow, and I come from Madras."

"Your name is Eleonora, and you come from Madras; but where are your parents? was that your father?" he asked with great emotion.

"No," said Eleonora, "I have no parents."

"Answer me, for the love of heaven," said the wounded man, solemnly; "who were your parents? what was your father's name?"

"That I never knew," she answered, with the same earnestness. "I am a foundling, brought up in the orphan hospital at Madras."

"Then you are mine," he said, stretching out his arms, and folding her to his bosom. "You are my lost child, the daughter of my Eleonora. My heart cannot deceive me—I see her features, such as I first saw her, and I hear her voice in yours;—oh! my child, my long lost child!"

"My father!" she said, "may I say father?"

"Stay, Eleonora, stay!" interrupted Mrs. Cheapstow, "let us be more certain before you give way to an idea which may only prove a disappointment to both."

"Impossible, my best friend!" answered Eleonora, "impossible that I can be deceived; he is like what I recollect of my father."

"What have I not suffered! and the impossibility of hearing of you, my child, in-

creased it. But it is past, and I am overpaid. Tell me all that has happened to you, and how it is I find you here."

"Not now," said Dr. M'Alpin, interposing, "all that will be for another time. She was lost and is found; for I cannot doubt more than yourself that she is your child. Let that satisfy you, and think of yourself for this night only, and to-morrow you may be in condition to hear all that you wish to know. We must now get you to your apartment."

The servants took up the litter, and began carrying it up stairs.

"Eh, Malcolm!" he continued, as his nephew ran towards him, "you are welcome home, my boy."

"I have brought him, you see," said Colonel Cheapstow, "as you desired, safe and sound."

"I am not born to be drowned, my dear uncle," said Malcolm gaily, returning his uncle's cordial grasp. "I am too much a

child of the sea, though we have come off better than I expected; but how are all at Stoneyards?"

The question brought back to his uncle's mind all that had passed there, which the latter events, infinitely more interesting, had chased from his recollection, but he did not think the present a time for communications, and only answered, "Your sister is there at present, but do you know you have other friends here?"

Malcolm did not hear the query, for catching a glimpse of Eleonora's dress, as she followed the people who carried her father up stairs, he ran into the house before his uncle had done speaking. "Eleonora! Miss Cheapstow!" he said.

She turned at the sound of his voice. "Oh! Mr. Sinclair, how happy I am to see you!" she extended her hand and burst into tears, overcome by what had just passed, and the recollection of Malcolm's kindness at a time it was so much required. "I have

found my father, Mr. Sinclair, and I am s
happy that I cannot speak."

Malcolm found no difficulty in expressin
the pleasure this unexpected meeting wa
productive of to him, and how much h
rejoiced in the discovery she had just made

"I do not intend to give up my claim
mind ye, Eleonora," said the doctor, fo
lowing them; "I loved you from the firs
minute I saw your sweet face, with th
affection of a parent, and though ye hav
found another, I will still keep my place; an
if I am not much mistaken, Eleonora, I a
not the only one in this house that desire
to prefer claims to your regard, though the
may not all be so disinterested."

Eleonora did not think it necessary t
hear this last sentence, but followed he
father into his room.

"Whatever claims a poor lieutenant i
the navy might have the presumption to en
tertain," said Malcolm, with his usual sin
cerity, "may not be listened to by one, wh

cannot be blamed for prizing his new-found treasure too highly.

"We shall see," answered his uncle.

"Did I not hear Mr. Sinclair's voice?" said Mrs. Cheapstow, coming from the drawing-room.

"Yes, my dear Mrs. Cheapstow, "here he is at your service," answered Malcolm, springing up two steps at once to meet her.

"Come with me, and tell me all you know of this gentleman, who turns out to be Eleonora's father. He was a passenger in the vessel with you, was he not?"

"Yes; but illness prevented our meeting until an hour before our unlucky landing, but from the little I did see of him, and his conduct in danger, he seems worthy to be Eleonora's father."

Malcolm left Mrs. Cheapstow to go and look after the men below, while his uncle dressed the wounded stranger, and made him over for the night to the care of Kato Roy, who watched by his bed, and had

strict orders from her master to avoid speak ing a word more than was necessary.

As Dr. M'Alpin was quitting the apart ment of the wounded gentleman, he wa met by Cussim Ali, coming up at a quicke pace than he had ever been known to us to say that amongst those saved from th wreck, he had found out Manning Sahil who save me from drown to desert island."

"Manning! is it possible?" said the doc tor, "how came he here without my di covering him at the rocks?"

"He not hurt, and you so busy wit wounded sahib, you not see in dark nigh He come away to rest, what time Colone Sahib stay to master's nephew."

"Very likely, Cussim, very likely—bu where is he? Go and tell him that I wil be with him the moment I have done wit the poor fellows below."

Dr. M'Alpin saw that every thing wa done for the comfort of the wounded, an provision made for the wants of the rest before he thought of indulging his own de

sire to shake hands with Manning, to whom he considered himself so much indebted. When he had left his patients to their repose, and seen the bountiful provision Mrs. Corbat had made for the rest in honour of Mr. Malcolm's arrival, he returned to his friends above stairs, and found Manning giving Colonel Chepstow a history of all that had befallen them since their quitting the island.

"To see you here to-night Manning," said Dr. M'Alpin, "is an unexpected pleasure. You are heartily welcome to Fernbraes. My poor fellow, whose life you saved, was the first to find you out by grateful instinct. I am rejoiced to see you amongst us."

"May every seaman, sir, after such a voyage as we have made, find such a port to anchor in!—this is different from the Andamans."

"Mr. Manning, let me present you to my nephew—my adopted son. Malcolm, let me introduce you to a friend to whom I owe the life of my poor Cussim Ali."

When the doctor next morning visited his patient he had the satisfaction to find him greatly recovered from the effects of last night, and did not therefore think it necessary any longer to deprive him of the company of his daughter, which he so much desired: he felt a deep interest in whatever concerned his new inmate, more, he confessed to Mrs. Cheapstow, than he could well explain, even from the strange circumstances of their first meeting.

"If I were a Hindoo, now, I should think that we had been friends in some previous state of existence."

"Or that you will be for time to come, which will answer the purpose equally well, M'Alpin," joined Colonel Cheapstow.

Eleonora spent the morning with her new-found parent, and gave him a faithful account of her life, from her reception at the Orphan-school at Madras until the present time. Though she sat by him, she was looking down, too much occupied in giving him the satisfaction he desired to ob-

serve the effect some of the names in her narrative produced upon her father. When she had finished, Eleonora left him to think over all that she had been telling him, and to compare the unlooked-for events which had effected their union.

The happy party at Fernbraes was next morning increased by the arrival of Miss Robina Ross from Kelpfield; who, having heard of last night's disasters, rode over to offer her assistance to the doctor, or personal attendance, if it was requisite, for his patients. While they were talking of the wounded stranger, and the discovery he had made in Eleonora, the door opened and the very person in question walked into the room, "feeling himself," as he said, "so much benefited by a good night's rest, that he could not restrain his impatience to make his thanks personally to their kind host, and those to whom he was so much indebted."

Robina Ross started at the first accents of the stranger's voice, and her colour went and came: looking steadfastly on him, she

said solemnly, "It is not possible—the grave cannot give up the dead: and yet I cannot be mistaken in the sound of my brother's voice, or in the glance of his eye, though it is hollow and sunk, and changed."

"No," said the stranger, extending his arms as he advanced towards her; "No, Robina, you are not deceived, and I have yet a sister."

"Kenneth Ross!" exclaimed the doctor, starting upon his feet as nimbly as his nephew could have done; "have I found my first, and my dearest friend, yet in the land of the living!"

"James M'Alpin," said the colonel, grasping his hand, while he held his sister to his bosom, "this hour is the reward of years of slavery and exile; but where is my child? that I may present her to my sister and my friend by the name she has a right to bear. You, Colonel Cheapstow, and you, madam," he continued, addressing Mrs. Cheapstow, "your generous hearts can conceive the pride and the pleasure I feel in presenting

such a child to such relatives,—to you I am indebted for this blessed hour."

"All this is well, my friend, excellent well," said the doctor, recovering from the transport into which such a scene had thrown him; "but I shall not throw away my authority as doctor, nor permit conversation which may undo all the effects of last night's rest. I am grown authoritative, Kenneth, since you knew me, and I desire that all expressions of gratitude and happiness should be reserved until you are more fit to make them. Our Finnan haddocks are cold, Cheapstow, and the broiled moorfowl not worth the trouble of eating."

While Colonel Ross, his sister, Mrs. Cheapstow, and their host, enjoyed their own quiet conversation; while Colonel Cheapstow and Manning walked down to the beach to inspect the scene of last night's wreck; and while Malcolm and Eleonora, by Dr. M'Alpin's desire, rode over to Stoneyards to inform Jamesina of all that had

happened, we may as well take the opportunity of their occupation to look back on the history of Colonel Ross, and spare him the trouble of telling it himself.

CHAPTER XII.

Daughter of Jove! relentless power,
Thou tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge, and torturing hour,
The bad affright—afflict the best!
Stern, rugged nurse! thyrigid lore
With patience many a year he bore;
What sorrow was thou bad'st him know,
And from his own, he learn'd to melt at others' woe.

GREY.

The History of Kenneth Ross, of Inchbraken.

KENNETH ROSS at an early age had entered his majesty's service, and upon his promotion to his majority, had, with his regiment, embarked to the East Indies, where he was accompanied by his wife. After a few years

their happiness was increased by the birth of a little daughter; but her mother's constitution, naturally delicate, sunk from that time. Her medical attendants ordered instant return to Europe, but she could not bring her mind to think of quitting her husband, and depriving him of the society of both herself and his infant; she hoped that change of air amongst the hills, to which they were ordered, might be all that was requisite, but the event turned out contrary. She died at an out station just when her husband had received orders to join his regiment previous to their embarkation for Europe. Colonel Ross, therefore, with his little girl, then between two and three years of age, attended by his faithful servant, Joe Henderson, for the little Eleonora's nurse had died at the same station with her mistress, and in such a country it was impossible to replace her recommenced their long march to the presidency.

As they were to pass through an insulated country, Colonel Ross thought it prudent t

have a strong guard, but notwithstanding this precaution they were on the second day suddenly attacked by a party of wandering Arabs, who at that time infested the country, carrying fire and sword wherever they made their appearance.

Joe Henderson was knocked down in the commencement of the fray, and lay stunned upon the ground—how long he did not know, but when he recovered from the effects of the blow, he found that the field had been fought, and won he had no doubt by the Arabs, from the number of Colonel Ross's guard, whom he found extended there; but after the most minute search he could not discern any traces of his master, nor those whom he had every reason to believe were the conquerors. All the busy combatants had gone from the field, and his natural conjecture was, that the Arabs had carried the day and decamped with their booty. Searching among the short jungle, a little off the scene of combat, he discerned the palanquin in which his master's child

had been carried, overturned in the grass, where the bearers in their fright had thrown it. Fortunately the child had received no injury, and had been preserved from danger by her inability to get out of the palanquin which lay sideways. Having satisfied himself that his master was not to be found, Joe took up his young charge and proceeded with her as fast as he could to rejoin his regiment. He carried the child in his arms, as in such a part of the country it was impossible to look for palanquin bearers, even if he had had money to pay them. He had an immense and toilsome journey to make, and, as we have already seen, succeeded in carrying the child safely to Madras, though his own life was the sacrifice of his faithful discharge of his duty.

Colonel Ross, in the short and desperate rencounter with the Arabs, had been wounded in the sword arm, and made prisoner; the first intention of his captors was to strip and hang him upon the next tree, but the sight of a troop of Company's cavalry coming on

at full speed in pursuit of them, caused them to alter their intention, and fly without losing an instant. The Arab chief threw Colonel Ross across the pommel of his saddle, in the idea that it would be better to keep him for a ransom, as his dress showed that he was an officer of rank, than put him to death upon the spot, as had been his first intention. They fled on the wings of fear, and for twenty-four hours continued their speed without once stopping to look back, along paths, over rocks and precipices where it would have been difficult for a goat to follow; but their horses, accustomed to the wildest routes, and the most continued exertion, without other refreshment for hours together than opium fastened upon the bits of their bridles, were capable of fatigue beyond the rest of their species.

Their unhappy prisoner had, during this tremendous ride, experienced torments which it would be impossible to describe; tied across the saddle, his feet hanging on one side, and his head on the other, every variety

and every alteration of physical suffering had been his, and when the troop at length halted in an arid spot surrounded by bare rocks, his barbarous conductor loosed the rope which bound him, and threw him to the ground as a dead body with which he had needlessly encumbered his good steed, and polluted himself, but since the penalty was incurred, he thought he might as well seek some indemnification.

"Death has taken our prey out of our hands," he said, "there is no ransom for this man," at the same time dismounting, and proceeding to search the body.

He took possession of Colonel Ross's watch, and cut off his epaulets, as being the only property which could be of use to him. He sought for money, but sought in vain; had he been better acquainted with the habits of Europeans he would have known that none ever carry a purse who are above the necessity of paying for their daily wants with their own hands. The clothes of his prisoner were, in the eyes of the almost

naked barbarian into whose hands he had fallen, perfectly useless; he therefore did not think it worth while to strip him or to take any thing for his own use but his sash and his pocket-handkerchief, which he bound round his head.

Polluted by contact with the dead, he was unable to eat with his comrades, and was obliged to remain apart until he should find water to cleanse him from the stain. The troop had retired to a little distance from the spot on which an object so abominable in their idea infested the air, and loosed their jaded horses to pick such withered grass and burnt shrubs as the place afforded, while they eat their parched corn, and then laid themselves down under the starry cope of heaven to sleep until the cool air before daylight should permit them to proceed. They had now got into a country where they did not dread pursuit from the company's troops; but as their hand was against every man, they knew that the hand of every man was against them.

When Colonel Ross recovered from the state of insensibility into which he had fallen during his dreadful ride, and found that he was quite alone, he easily conjectured what had happened; unacquainted with the habits of those into whose hands he had fallen, he wished to ascertain if they had actually left the ground before he made any movement; he soon found from the noise of their horses that they were still there, and determined to lie still until their departure as the most certain means of escaping their vigilance. Should any of them return to the spot, as it was not improbable they might, and miss him from the place, he knew that instant and minute search would be made, which his ignorance of the country must certainly lead to his discovery; but if he remained quiet as they had left him, the idea that life was gone, would effectually protect him from the inspection which could make them discover their mistake. He had reason to be satisfied with his own determination, for before recommencing their march two of

the gang came towards him in the clear moonlight.

"We shall see," he heard them say, "if the European is really dead, or if he has only fallen into a swoon from carrying his head in a different way to what he ever did before in his riding."

"There he lies," answered the other, "death has done his work, and our brother since he was polluted by carrying the infidel, did not forget to pay himself for it."

They spit to avoid swallowing the air tainted by such impurities, and retraced their steps to where their brethren in arms were mustering and mounting their horses.

As soon as Colonel Ross lost the last sound of their unshod feet as they filed through the straight and rocky valley into the open plain beyond, anxious to cross it before daylight should discover them to the eyes of those who might have heard of their exploits, being certain that they were actually gone, he went to the spot where they

had passed the night, eagerly collecting the few grains of dried corn which had fallen from their spare repast. There were no signs of human habitation to be discerned, nor any indication of a road save the track of the robber Arabs. Supposing it possible for him to follow such an uncertain indication, often lost in the nature of the soil over which they had passed, he must die of want, if he were not, which was more probable, the prey of wild animals. To get down into the plain in the hope of being able to fall in with some cavalcade of travellers, was his only resource; but his suspense was soon brought to a close. When day dawned, he saw a body of horsemen approaching by the same road by which his captors had come, and from their wild and warlike appearance he had too much reason to fear that they were another party of the same gang, well knowing that many such were roving over the northern provinces of India, where the unprotected state of the

country, its difficulty of access, and their own numbers promise them plunder with impunity.

He looked anxiously round for some means of concealment, but the narrow stony ravine in which he found himself, did not afford means of concealment or escape, and before he could even make trial of the only projecting point sufficient to shelter him, he was marked by the keen eyes of those accustomed to the range of birds of prey and seized in an instant. Fortunately he had sufficient acquaintance with their language to be able to answer the questions they put to him, and to account in a manner which they deemed probable for his being discovered in such a situation.

For a few minutes they deliberated among themselves what should be his fate—some were of opinion like their predecessors that instant death was the safest measure—"dead men give no information"—but others considering that he was a man in the prime of life, prudently calculated that his price as a

slave would be at least worth the risk and trouble incurred in taking him along with them. Decided on this important point, they gave him a portion of the dry grain which they carried for their own use, as they were unwilling to reduce his value by famine.

Colonel Ross tried to make them understand that if he were well treated, and that they would undertake to send a messenger into the Company's provinces to negotiate the transaction, they should receive a ransom for his freedom, more considerable than any price they could expect by selling him to slavery. This was a risk, however, they were not willing to run—any business of the kind must be done in writing, and that, too, in a language of which they were ignorant, and consequently could not detect the information it was, perhaps, intended to give. They therefore persisted, notwithstanding all his entreaties, in adhering to their own plan of selling him for a slave, whenever a purchaser should offer.

With this intention they mounted him upon the spare horse of one of their comrades who had fallen in their last rencounter, and tying his feet under the animal's body, placed him in the centre of the troop, with positive injunctions on pain of instant death, to refrain from thinking of escape.

In this way they continued their march for several weeks, never intermitting the same vigilant precautions; they travelled in the night and rested during the day to prevent discovery, as they were returning with the fruits of a successful campaign, and unwilling to run risks, where they had more to lose than it was probable they could gain. In vain Colonel Ross offered any bribe for means to transmit a letter regarding his child to his friends at Madras—his words were but promises—he had no money to dazzle the eyes of the faithful, and the single circumstance of their being unable to read what should be written, weighed more with their suspicious watchfulness, than

even the promised gol
cupidity.

Tormented by an
Colonel Ross next en
means in his power,
party, or interest any o
efforts were lost upon i
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misfortunes of human
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licious and irritating contrivances of man's inhumanity—corroded by unmixed bitterness the mind is apt to fret itself against the injustice of human kind, forgetful that an all-seeing God, uses in his wisdom the instruments of punishment most necessary for the correction of dispositions, which only He can appreciate in their length and breadth.

Colonel Ross, in the pride of his independence was made to taste the gall of subjection to the will of an insolent and audacious banditti, the meanest of whom did not hesitate to strike him on the face, bound and unarmed as he was, when he in any way thwarted their savage will. The very desperation of his circumstances brought him to consider his own existence—its end and object, and to look into his own heart in a way which had never before been necessary to his peace. When surrounded by the blessings of life in rich profusion, the Giver had been shut out from his sight by the magnitude of his own gifts; but now that they were recalled, and that the scene of

this world's comforts were stripped and bare, he saw beyond it; and his mind, no longer satisfied with a vague idea of God's general providence, sought to realize his directing hand in all that had overtaken him. The belief that the bitter draught was sent by Him who afflicts in mercy, who permitted not the cup of suffering to pass even from his own Son, as it opened upon his mind, took from his situation the thing which would otherwise have made him seek death to escape from the miseries and humiliations of a life too grievous to be borne.

Those who have met with cruelty, injustice, scorn, and oppression, can best imagine the first swellings of a generous and independent heart, pressed down by the trials which beset Colonel Ross; but, desperate and hopeless as they seemed, he called up every right principle in his mind, and every energy in his nature, to support what he could not combat; for he soon plainly perceived that all idea of escape must be given up as useless. His guards

watched with vigilance which nothing could impair,—and had it been possible to elude them, the nature of the country into which they had carried him would only have made his death the more certain.

They had now crossed the Indus, and were advancing by rapid marches to the great desert on the boundaries of Persia, where they fell in with a large caravan of merchants, and travellers taking advantage of their protection. To think of offensive measures was impossible against such well-armed adversaries; the troop therefore disposed themselves in a pacific manner, waited at a little distance, and sent one of their number to greet the strangers, when they soon found a purchaser for their captive, in a Mussulman noble, who, as his road for some distance lay in the same direction, had joined the escort. The price was arranged to the satisfaction of both parties, and Colonel Ross transferred to the service of his new master, while his old tyrants held on their way. He had suffered so much while in

their power, that he was glad of any change in the idea that it could not be for the worse. His new master seemed pleased with his erect and dignified bearing, the only marks of superiority of which he was perhaps a competent judge, and after having questioned him upon his knowledge, assigned to him the care of some fine horses which he had purchased, and was conducting to his own house.

Shere Ishmael, the name of Colonel Ross's new master, was a man of great wealth and much consideration, and was then upon his return from a distant province to his own house. His new slave strove by assiduous attention to his favourite horses to win favour, without which there was little chance of his ever being able to regain liberty, or make his existence known to his friends and family.

Shere Ishmael soon separated from the caravan, and as he travelled by easy marches, in consideration of his numerous retinue and cattle, Colonel Ross by degrees recovered

from the effects of the rough treatment to which he had so long been exposed. He had the satisfaction to observe that the care of the beautiful animals under his charge did not go unobserved by his master, who conceived a favourable idea of his abilities and education from his knowledge of horses. These favourites, however, beautiful as they were, afforded but little pleasure to their indolent possessor, except the pride of having in his stud animals of such celebrity.

CHAPT

From the flowere
Of this clear lake, now s
Amid ambrosial tufts, wh
Weeping their perfumed
Stood crown'd with Shar
The patriarch palm his
Showered plenteous: whe
And rich pomegranate,
Their racy seed; or whe
Mature, the citron wave

On Shere Ishmae
house, he thought
new slave Pahari, as
called, from his dutie
n his garden, in whi

He had observed that upon the road his slave had often gathered the plants which he found in his way and examined them with attention, from which circumstance he had concluded that he would be a proper person to intrust with the care of his favourite retreat. Shere Ishmael, like most Mussulmans of his rank, had been a hunter in his youth, but now preferred the tranquil pleasures of smoking on his chaboutter* to the fatigue of the saddle. A very little time was sufficient to show him that he had judged right of his slave Pahari, and that his knowledge was equal to his assiduity. Shere Ishmael could soon boast of a greater variety of fine flowers than he had ever before possessed, and the celebrity of his garden spread through the country. It was renowned for producing the greatest quantity of flowers for processions, as well as the greatest abundance of roses for rose-water, and Shere Ishmael felt his first pleasure greatly increase as soon as he knew that it

* Platform.

was talked of by others, or that in their own phrase, "the fame of his garden filled the world."

Pahari finding that he grew in favour in his master's sight, redoubled his exertions to please him, and strove to instruct the native servants who worked under him, in the best manner of cultivating the plants, and improving the fruits.

The garden in which Shere Ishmael so much delighted, was a large square piece of ground adjoining the family apartments of his house, and surrounded by a very high wall; it was well stocked with fine old trees in thickets and alleys, leading to two large tanks—one at each end. That nearest the house was appropriated to bathing, and a handsome flight of white marble steps led down into the water, which was shaded by drooping foliage. The other was an immense reservoir of gold fish, as feeding these nimble captives and watching their lively evolutions was a favourite amusement of their sedentary lord. The borders of

these tanks were planted with the choicest flowers, and the scent of roses perfumed the air, while in the night the bulbul* answered from the thicket. Here it was Shere Ishmael's pleasure to sit and smoke his hookah for hours together, on a little platform extending over the tank, having an ornamental canopy overhead, while a servant at his feet threw food to the gold fishes which gambolled around him.

The unhappy Pahari laboured year after year without being able to accomplish the end which had, during all that time, never been for one hour out of his thoughts. His master, conscious of his value, treated him with kindness and consideration,—at least with as much kindness as a native of his rank could bestow upon a menial in his service. He provided him with every comfort his situation would admit, except those he most desired; for, certain that the desire of escape must exist, however disguised or repressed, he took care that his slave, from the

* Bulbul—nightingale.

first hour of his entering his service, shoul
never receive the smallest portion of mone
and he prohibited every one in his hous
hold upon pain of his displeasure or deat
from bestowing money upon Pahari for an
kind of service he might render; joined t
which, he kept such a strict watch, and ha
taken such effectual measures to preve
evasion, that escape seemed impracticable.

Shere Ishmael had caused a house to b
built for the accommodation of his Europea
slave immediately beyond the garden-wal
this little dwelling and small court, he su
rounded with a wall as high as that of th
garden, and covered it with a grating ov
the top, so that there was neither entranc
or exit except by the single small doo
which led into the garden, and which, whe
he had left it at night, was strongly close
after him on the garden side. Beyond thes
precincts he was never permitted to mov
and he was sometimes tempted to despair
its ever being otherwise.

After many years of long captivity ha

slowly passed away, uncheered by the slightest communication with any friend, and the hope which had hitherto sustained him was almost dead,—for he found that as his selfish master was satisfied with his exertions, his precautions were if possible augmented, and that an addition of personal comfort tending to preserve his health and secure his life was all the fruit h ereaped,—an incident occurred which seemed to animate his expiring hopes.

Shere Ishmael had been for many years without a son to inherit his name, or lay his head in the dust, the greatest misfortune which in his mussulman estimation could have lighted upon him. Then Mustapha Ishmael was born to the delight and honour of his mother. But from his childhood upwards this youth had manifested such an untractable and sullen spirit, that greatly as Shere Ishmael had desired an heir, he had more sorrow than satisfaction in his son.

Mustapha Ishmael had attained his twefth year before another son made his appear-

ance to dispute the inheritance and the affections of his father. This was the young Islam, "the beauty of the world," "the sun of his father's house," and "the star of all hearts," as he was termed by his doting parents; and he it was who ultimately changed the gloomy prospect which had so long darkened round Colonel Ross.

One morning when he was at work in a thicket near the great tank, he was startled by a splash in the water, and running to the spot to ascertain what had happened, he found that the little Islam had fallen from the platform, where, in imitation of his father he had been feeding the gold fishes. Colonel Ross, who was attached to the child now of the same age as his Eleonora when he had last seen her, instantly plunged into the water, and brought up the terrified boy whom he delivered into the hands of his alarmed father, who, upon the child's being missed in the house, had preceded the servants into the garden, almost anticipating what had happened.

Shere Ishmael, in the first transports of his joy on receiving his lost favourite, carried him in his arms to his frantic mother, who could hardly be persuaded though she saw her darling move, and heard him speak, that he had really escaped with life. As soon as she was satisfied in this point, her next idea was to denounce vengeance upon the servants who were in care of the child, and to whose carelessness she attributed what had happened, if indeed they had not been bribed by the mother of Mustapha Ishmael, who had always been considered as heir apparent of his father's fortune, until this young and more favoured child had come to disinherit him.

As soon as this idea took possession of the mind of the beautiful Neer-ul-Dowlah, she demanded vengeance upon the guilty culprit whose business it was as head-attendant upon her child to have watched over him, as those who watch for the morning. In punishing him she felt as if her

jealous anger could extend to the mother of Mustapha Ishmael.

In vain the unhappy man protested that in running with the child he had got a large thorn into his foot, which he had only stopt for a moment to extract, and that during that moment his young lord had escaped into the garden without observation, and that he would sooner have cut his own throat than willingly have suffered a hair of his head to be hurt. The female domestics, willing to please their mistress, protested with one voice, "that it was not for a slave like him to feel sorrow or pain, when the pleasure of his lord's son was concerned. What were all the thorns that could be in the foot of a slave to the will of a great man's child?"

"It is true," answered Neer-ul-Dowlah, "how could a man like him feel pain when he was in the care of my child, if he had not been bribed by the mother of Mustapha Ishmael, who cannot see without envy

the gracious gift which the Prophet has granted to my prayers, nor the favour which he finds in the sight of his father? such a servant is unworthy to live on the earth—away with him, away with him, let his head be taken from his body for a warning to any one who dares to neglect my child."

Sheer Ishmael though convinced that the accident had happened as the servant stated, did not think it worth while to displease or thwart his favourite wife about a thing of such very little importance as the life of a creature so far below him, and who was doubtless created for his use; at all events, deserved or not, his punishment would be a salutary warning to those who came after him.

Influenced by such reasons he made but a slight attempt to turn the wrath of the lovely Neer-ul-Dowlah from its object, and, finding that opposition made her but the more resolute, he permitted her to follow her own inclination in such a trifle, and returned to the garden to bestow favour upon the

Christian slave who had preserved his child, and who was until this moment forgotten.

"Pahari," he said "this day has risen fortunately for you — you have been honoured to do a service to your master's house, and have his permission to ask what reward you please, short of your liberty, or conveying letters to your infidel country."

"If my lord thinks that I have done well," answered Pahari, "and if he rejoices in the presence of his child, let him think also what I suffer, cut off from mine, who is even ignorant of my existence in this world, while she has neither the care of father or mother to guide and direct her."

"Your own words answer you—never having had your care, your child cannot have missed it; but this spot, accustomed to your watchful hand, would languish and die if it were withdrawn. Pahari, think of what I can grant without more loss to your lord than gain to you—for a wise man calculates the effects of steps before he puts his feet in motion."

"Let me speak once more, and let not my lord be displeased that a freeborn man, who has also had rule over many of his own people in his own land, should desire to return to the place of his nativity, his family and his child—let not the fear of hurt to the inanimate productions of the soil close the fountain of generosity which flows with the greatest force in the most noble minds—but let my lord know that I have trained every servant under my rule to look to his interest and his pleasure as I have done, and that my absence will not wither a flower, or dry a plant in this fair garden."

"I have told you, Pahari," answered Shere Ishmael in rising wrath, "to ask what it is my pleasure to grant, and fit for you to receive. Will you have slaves to attend upon you? or splendid clothes to adorn you? sumptuous fare for your table, or music to refresh your soul after toil?—name what you want and it shall be yours, for Shere Ishmael is as generous as he is great."

The Mussulman paused in haughty dignity, waiting a reply to his gracious proposals, but finding that it did not come, he bent his brow and folded his arms as he continued in a louder tone,

"Speak, slave, your lord commands you to say which of his bounties is to flow upon you—what is your request?"

"I have none," answered Colonel Ross, stepping back without bending his head. "Know, Shere Ishmael, that liberty is the only gift in your possession which your slave thinks worth his acceptation."

"Insolent and audacious slave! do you dare to set at defiance the bounties of your master? Do you know that your life is in my hands, and that in a moment I can send you to share the execution which is at this moment preparing for the careless servant who brought fear into the house of his lord?"

"No, Shere Ishmael, death next to liberty is a boon which self-interest would not grant me; but if you have not come

here to mock me with the offer of gifts which you will not bestow—grant me the life of this condemned man."

"To show you, unbelieving as you are, that the faith of a Mussulman is without stain—the life of the dog is yours. Here, Abas!" he continued, to a servant who waited at a respectful distance behind him, "stop the execution, and say that the life of the dog is granted to the Christian slave, by the clemency of his lord who has permitted a slave's request to approach his ear—but let the order be that the reprieved wretch never again pollute the air I breathe, or no power on earth shall save him."

Abbas made his salams and departed upon his errand of extorted mercy; while Shere Ishmael turned away from one whose insolence, as he termed it, rendered him unworthy of the light of his countenance, and spake to himself, though loud enough to be heard by Pahari—

"I have done more than ever lord did for those who have no life but his favour—

no existence but his will: and let those for whom I have retracted my own pleasure look to the use they make of such astonishing favour, and see that their zeal and industry grow in proportion."

Having finished his speech, Shere Ishmael did not deign to bestow a single regard upon his auditor, but turned and slowly retraced his steps into his house, not without something of the feeling which animated Haman when Mordecai the Jew refused to bow before him—that a slave had set his power at nought, and had in a manner compelled him to grant what was contrary to his wishes, was an affront not easily to be forgiven, and if self-interest had not restrained him, vengeance might have followed.

It was different with his wife, the beautiful Neer-ul-Dowlah, who felt gratitude to the preserver of a child upon whom all the affections of her heart depended. He was not only the sole object of her love, but of her ambition, and he gave her the means of enjoying a pleasure scarcely less sensible, that

of mortifying and humiliating the only one of the ladies of the family who had ever dared to enter into the least rivalry with her.

The mother of Mustapha Ishmael had, presuming upon her having given an heir to the fortunes of Shere Ishmael, ventured to conduct herself towards the reigning favourite in a way which no mussulman woman could forget or forgive; and deeply as Neer-ul Dowlah would certainly have felt the loss of her boy, the idea that Noor Jehan would rejoice in her sorrow, and that Mustapha Ishmael would profit by it, and take his accustomed place in his father's household would have added to its bitterness.

When Shere Ishmael, in the overflowing of his indignation, related to her the scene which had just passed in the garden, between him and his insolent slave Pahari, he was incensed to find that she did not feel the insult offered to him in the rejection of his favours, as he thought she was in duty bound to do. Angry with her indifference

to his slighted dignity, he rejoiced in the opportunity of giving her a piece of information, which he had a few minutes before dreaded to communicate;—as if certain of rousing her from her indifference, he continued—

"And in his audacity, this proud Christian dog extracted a pardon from me for the slave whom your just anger had ordered to execution."

Neer-ul-Dowlah heard the fact without the storm of indignation which he expected to raise; her anger, like that of a wilful child, had subsided, and she even felt something of admiration for him who had dared to control the man whom she was accustomed to look upon as all-powerful.

She answered mildly, "It is not for me to disapprove what my lord has been pleased to do,—his bounties, like the sun, shine on all."

Shere Ishmael looked at her for a moment in silence, unable to comprehend the motive which reconciled her to the pardon of

wretched being whom an hour before she had declared unworthy to live, and whose instant death she had demanded as the only means of freeing her mind from constant apprehension on account of her child, whom she professed to think in danger while such a miscreant encumbered the earth.

"This white dog," he thought, "has a spell to bind the minds of those who come near him, else why should I have granted his request, and why should she have been contented that I had done so?"

"Had it not been for the loss, Mother of Islam," he continued, "that my garden would have sustained, I would have listened to his prayers, and let him go to his country and his child."

"His child," answered Neer-ul-Dowlah, "will you keep him at a distance from his child, and he has preserved yours? If it had not been for him sorrow would this day have been in the house of Shere Ishmael, and its hope would have been laid in the dust."

"The house and the hopes of Shere Ishmael," answered the Mussulman proudly, "are above the reach of a slave like him; and it fills my ears with wonder, Neer-ul-Dowlah, to hear you speak for an infidel dog from a strange land. Though he has been honoured to render service to his lord, our holy Prophet has not allowed the wives of his faithful followers to take such names within their lips, nor to think of such wretches in their hearts. What signifies them, or their country, or their kindred, to the servants of the true Prophet, more than the lair of the jackal, or the brother of the dog? Do men, when they take the wild beasts of the forest and put them to their use, think of the rest who are left in their dens? or do they lighten the burden and give them liberty because they snort and champ the bit? Do they not rather make them feel the whip and the lash, and break their spirits to what is required of them? And when I have got one who serves me better than ever slave served me before,

shall I play the fool and give him his liberty?—shall I throw away the goods which fortune has put into my hands?"

"He has saved my child," returned Neer-ul-Dowlah, "and shall I not wish that he was restored to his?—shall I not wish that Shere Ishmael, whose bounties reach to the ends of the earth, whose light shines on the dark places and they become bright, should cause his countenance to lighten upon the fate of his slave, and turn it to joy?"

"Neer-ul-Dowlah, I have told you that the wives of the faithful are to think only of the happiness of the lot which the Prophet has bestowed upon them, and I warn you that Shere Ishmael will not dispense with the duty which is claimed by the humblest of the followers of Mahomet—let not your heart be stained by another thought upon the fate of this infidel stranger on pain of my displeasure."

Shere Ishmael rose in silence, and left the apartment in the conviction that his severity had laid this subject at rest for ever; but

his prohibition had only excited in the mind of the beautiful Neer-ul-Dowlah, an ardent desire to see the slave she was forbidden to think of, and if possible to give him the means of effecting his escape, which seemed to her desirable, in proportion as it was opposed by Shere Ishmael.

Her little boy now rose refreshed from sleep, his dark cheek crimsoned by the hue of health, and his black eyes sparkling with animation; he ran towards his mother, and as he cast himself into her extended arms, she resolved that if she could prevent it, his preserver should not for ever languish in captivity. She recollected that upon the first birthday of Mustapha Ishmael, Noor Jehan had procured a boon from Shere Ishmael which he had sworn never to grant. The recollection came like fuel to flame, and she felt her honour engaged to resist her husband's unjust commands, or even to punish him for the way in which her suit had been treated.

"Haughty as he is," she thought, "I shall

let him know that my will is something in his household—I shall not be treated as if age had already deprived me of the right to command. Shall I, the jewel of the whole world, and the mother of his favourite son in whose presence none dare stand erect, submit to be treated with less consideration than Noor Jehan, who is not worthy to lift up her eyes in my presence ?"

CHAPTER XIV.

Now let us thank th' Eternal Power, convinced
That heaven but tries our virtues by affliction;
That oft the cloud which wraps the present hour,
Serves but to brighten all our future days.

BROWN'S *Barbarossa.*

WHILE Neer-ul-Dowlah, actuated by gratified jealousy and revenge was, on her part, considering how she could carry her project into execution, Allumgier, the disgraced attendant, whom Colonel Ross had saved from execution, was no less anxious to effect the same purpose, and partly from the same motives. He felt some slender emotions of gratitude to one whom he only

considered as the passive instrument used by overruling destiny to accomplish what was already predestinated; but he burnt with the ardent desire to be revenged on the cruel master who had condemned him unheard, and without compunction; and who, when mercy had been extorted from him, had banished his unoffending servant from the home of his fathers, to be a wanderer amongst those whose faces he had never seen, and whose speech was strange to his ears.

To deprive Shere Ishmael of one source of his pride and pleasure, by giving liberty to his most useful and valued slave, was a revenge which Allumgier thought he could enjoy without the fear of detection. He knew that Pahari, as he was accustomed to call Colonel Ross, could both read and write the language of the country, for he had seen him so occupying his leisure hours, and with this knowledge, he arranged his project accordingly.

When Colonel Ross had retired to his

little enclosure on the night of this eventful day, and was preparing as usual to cook his evening meal in his little court, he was surprised at the noise of something falling at his side, which had been thrown over the wall and through the grating. He took it up, and found a palm-leaf tied to a stone.

Satisfied that such an arrangement had not taken place without design, he trimmed his lamp and examined the contents of the leaf which served for paper. He had some difficulty in making out the character, which was traced upon the leaf without ink, by the point of a sharp needle. He was obliged to increase his fire, and after a time read as follows:

"Pahari,

"If you want to see your own country before death takes you, fate sends you one who will to-morrow night, after the moon has retired from the land of the faithful, cut a hole in the gratings which enclose you like a beast of the jungle. When you hear the hand that works for your freedom, let no

words escape your lips—wait in patience until the following night, and then when the moon has veiled her light, use the rope-ladder which you will find, and mount in silence. At the outside of your prison you will see him whose fate it is to set you free—follow where he leads, but let your tongue cleave to your mouth. If this writing give joy, throw the stone back over the wall—be prudent and be dumb."

Colonel Ross's first impulse on reading this welcome note was to obey the last injunction; he threw the stone over the wall, and having again read his directions, burnt the palm-leaf, and then sat down to consider who could possibly be so much interested in his favour as to take such a hazardous step, and to propose what was still more so.

Allumgier, with whom he had frequently conversed in the garden, and who had, in fact, in his leisure hours taught him to write his letters upon palm-leaves with an iron pen, was the only person he could possibly imagine who could run such a risk; for in the

evening he had heard from the people in the garden that Allumgier was the reprieved offender, though he was ignorant of the circumstance at the time he had demanded pardon for the condemned culprit.

"Allumgier under all these circumstances must be the man;" an idea which again kindled the hope of liberty which was almost dead within him. This night, the first in which he had ever had any plausible cause to hope, seemed long beyond endurance;—he thought over all which might possibly take place, until weary by his own suggestions, he tried to lose them in sleep; but he soon awaked from his feverish and unrefreshing slumbers, and walked out into the clear moonlight, in the idea, that the wished-for morning had at length dawned; but he still saw the same bright stars burning in their own settled beauty—the same deep blue heaven over his head as he had done for all the long years of his captivity. These stars looking down on his nightly solitude he had been accustomed to regard as his familiar

friends, in all his sorrows; he had often raised his eyes to these beautiful and unchanging witnesses of his afflictions—these evidences of divine power and goodness, and sighed to be relieved from the various ills which flesh is heir to;—he had wished to join the company of those who, after many tribulations, have washed their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb—this night he again looked upon these stars, but in his altered frame of mind still desired to see them in the land of the living.

"But thy will be done, O my God!" he said, as, oppressed by the feelings which newly-awakened hope had set afloat in his heart, he bent before the Father of the spirits of all flesh—"thou knowest the inmost recesses of my soul—thou seest the chambers of imagery—thou hast formed the heart of man, and thou alone canst control and restrain it."

Morning at length did dawn—the last morning but one which Colonel Ross hoped to pass as a slave; he had never before listened with so much pleasure to the turning

of his jailer's key in the door which admitted him to the garden. His work led him to the borders of the bathing-tank near the house, and at some distance from the rest of the people who were occupied in a thicket at the end of the garden. While he was stooping to prune one of the rose-bushes, a white handkerchief fluttered down as if from the house and fell at his feet. He looked up in the intention to discover whence it had come, and perceived a veiled figure partly concealed by the window-blind. She made a quick sign of silence, threw out a purse and instantly shut the window, as if afraid of being remarked. That single high window and the door by which Shere Ishmael entered, were the only communications between the house and the garden. Colonel Ross took up the gift which he could not doubt was intended for him. This was no time to examine the contents, curious as he might be to know what they were, and he hid the bag in his waistband and went on with his work.

As soon as he found himself again alone i

his enclosure he drew forth the new-found treasure which had come so unexpectedly into his possession, and found it to contain a quantity of gold mohwrs, and one of the right-hand shells which the natives of Asia believe to secure prosperity to the possessor. The sight of money to which his eyes had been so long strangers, and which had been for years kept from his grasp as the key of liberty, now seemed to his excited feelings as an immediate forerunner of release.

"Let me but once be beyond these walls," he thought, "and this will do the rest—this will smooth all difficulties and end my hopes or my fears in certainty—yes," he said as he divided the gold into separate packets, and sewed it into the clothes he meant to wear on the night of his flight—"this yellow earth will accomplish all—had it been sooner in my possession, perhaps all the bolts and bars of the suspicious Shere Ishmael might not have been firm enough to deter me;—this, at least," he thought, examining the shell, "must come from one who wishes well to my projects—

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arbitrary master, and the shell which accompanied the money showed that it was with the intention of procuring his freedom—for what was there in which he could desire success, if not in his efforts to obtain liberty?

The nearer the hour approached, and the greater the number of obstacles which were removed, the more impatient did Colonel Ross become for the darkness which should allow his unknown friend to open the grate of his prison, and let the captive go free. After his evening meal he tried to lay himself down, and forget, in sleep, the time which must elapse before the moon, in her first quarter, should withdraw her light, but he started at every sound. The wing of a bat, the distant howl of the wolves roaming for their prey, and the hooting of the night birds had never appeared so incessant and so annoying.

At length, for time wears on, whether we watch its progress in breathless impatience, or slumber in tranquil oblivion through the hours, the wished-for sound caught his open ear;

the grating of a file was softly but distinctly distinguishable from all the other noises with which it was occasionally mingled. He listened, he hardly dared to breathe for fear of breaking his compact of silence, but the effort to refrain from speaking one single word to the dark outline of a human figure, which he could plainly perceive, perched overhead between him and the starry sky, the motion of whose arm he could see, as the little grating noise of the file sunk into his ear—was almost beyond his power.

If his eyes could have for one moment met those of the creature upon whom his hopes depended, he would have been satisfied; he would by that single glance have had a fixed idea of him upon whose form his fate hung; but it was impossible—he felt that he was undistinguishable in the darkness which covered his features, and to make a light at that unusual hour was an expedient which he dared not risk.

After he had listened and watched, and watched and listened to the unremitting

movements of the figure above, until the increased freshness of the air gave indication of the approaching dawn, he observed the silent workman in the intention of showing him that his labour was accomplished, raise the small part of the grating which he had cut away, held it up for a moment above his head, that the prisoner might see that his way was open, then replaced it as before, and disappeared.

Colonel Ross saw the movement with great satisfaction, convinced that as his unknown friend had happily completed so much, he would not fail him at the appointed hour. The screaming of the fox-bats as they quitted the fruit-trees in the garden, where they had been feasting all night, gave warning that the first streak of morning was visible on the horizon, and he prepared to recommence the labours of another day; "but it is the last," he thought, "the very last I shall ever pass in miserable captivity,"—the thought consoled him, "in four-and-twenty hours I shall be free!"

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his eye rested upon the straight outlet, his mind went forward to the other side, where all was new and unknown.

"Shall I," was his natural thought, "by that narrow passage regain my country, my friends, and my long lost child, if, indeed, my Eleonora is still an inhabitant of this lower world? all I hope for below lies on the other side of that little opening which must be to me the door of certainty; and though I know that such an opening does exist, still I cannot attain it without the assistance of the hand by which it was made."

But Colonel Ross in the midst of his anxieties did not forget the bodily exertions he would be called upon to make, and in order that he might be competent to the undertaking, laid himself down to rest, in the agreeable expectation that when he was next awaked it would not be to servitude. Security had taken possession of his mind, and he actually slept, until something falling at his side aroused him; he extended his

hands which caught hold of a ladder of cord in the darkness. Looking up he saw that the grating was open, and mounted without losing an instant, or uttering a word. As soon as he had gained the roof, his dumb friend, who waited upon the parapet, drew up the ladder and replaced the grating as he had done on the former night.

Colonel Ross admired the forethought which devised this means of throwing dust in the eyes of those who would doubtless make the narrowest scrutiny as soon as their flight was discovered; but no word passed his lips—his conductor again fastened his ladder by two iron hooks which he had attached to one end, and motioned to Colonel Ross to descend before him. When he had reached the bottom of the wall his guide above again undid the ladder, and let himself down on his feet like a cat. He took up the ladder, seized his *protégé* by the hand, and without uttering a syllable, crossed into the jungle upon the opposite side.

In silence and in darkness they walked

quickly forward by a path with which the guide seemed to be familiar, and when they emerged from the shadow of the trees, it was upon the banks of a rapid river. The guide letting go the hand of his companion, stooped down behind some bushes, and drew forth four large pieces of very light spongy wood, covered over with a smooth bark, which prevented them from absorbing the water, and rendered them exceedingly buoyant. These he had previously placed in readiness, and taking one of the pieces under each arm, and making his friend do the same with the other two, he threw himself into the stream of the river, and was instantly followed by the colonel, who was well enough acquainted with native habits to have seen this mode of travelling before. They were both carried forward with such rapidity by the current that the fugitives felt every moment more secure in the impossibility of being overtaken, and Colonel Ross's only fear was that from the immense rate at which the river rushed they must be ap-

proaching some cataract, but as his guide still maintained the same obstinate silence, he did not think fit to disturb it by question, conjecturing that he must be well acquainted with the nature of the country from the step he had taken, and that he must have good reason for the dumb show which he thought proper to keep up.

When morning began to appear, Colonel Ross for a moment feared that his European complexion would betray him to those who might come to the river for devotion, but one glance at his own sunburnt hands and arms put the notion to flight ; his beard and mustaches had grown, and he had no doubt but the tint of his face and neck had become as native as his hands. Reassured upon this point he returned the salam of the first bather whom they passed, and who addressed them with—

" Salam, brothers, you travel at a good hour."

" It is true, brother," answered the guide, who now proved to be Allumgier, breaking

silence for the first time, "but we have a vow to perform before the sun looks on the mosque."

Before the answer could be given, the stream had carried them far beyond the bather, and Allumgier continued,

"We are now out of the reach of the old wolf, Shere Ishmael—we have sailed more miles in four hours than he or his best horses could make in ten. The waters which run in this country do not faint by the way, and before we join the Great River (meaning the Indus) we shall be farther than he dares to follow us, for the Newab whose country we are now coming to, is one with whom Shere Ishmael cannot drink of the same stream, or eat of the same tree, and we may rest in security until the sun is low."

CHAPTER XV.

Swiftly, brother, wilt thou ride,
O'er the long and stormy tide,
Fleeter than the hurricane,
Till thou view those scenes again,
Where thy father's house was rear'd,
Where thy mother's voice was heard?
Where the dance, the festive song,
Of many a friend divided long,
Doom'd through stranger lands to roam,
Shall bid thy spirit welcome home!

BOWLES.

ALLUMGIER had chose to float down the river, as such a mode of travelling left no traces, rather than run the risk of seizing a boat in his master's neighbourhood, which would be instantly missed, and as certainly betray the way the fugitives had

taken. To have hoped for concealment by remaining in a district under the power of Shere Ishmael would have been impossible; and even if he could have procured horses, flight in that way equally so, as his master was renowned for having the best, and in the greatest number in the country, at his command. Allumgier's plan was not only therefore the safest, but at the same time the most speedy, and they were actually out of Shere Ishmael's power before their absence was dreamed of.

At the usual hour the bolt of Pahari's solitary dwelling was undrawn, and the door opened, but contrary to custom no slave appeared. "He is sick," said the head gardener, as he entered, "and is still in his house."

The little dwelling was soon examined with no better success; his bed was empty and he was nowhere to be found. Every thing remained in its usual condition, and there seemed no possible means by which he could have made his escape, unless, indeed, as the

gardener and his associates (for his noise had brought the whole party to his assistance) were of opinion, some enchanter had rendered the infidel invisible to mussulman eyes, and so effected his escape.

The gardeners clamoured together, each louder than his fellow, in expressions of wonder and amazement, till the unusual tumult soon conveyed the unwelcome intelligence to the ears of Shere Ishmael, who heard with fury that his valuable slave Pahari was nowhere to be found. "Who shut him in last night? Who opened the door this morning?" he demanded.

The head gardener stood forward, and salaming to the ground, informed his lord that he, in the sight of all present had last night locked up the white slave as usual, and that in their presence also he had unlocked the door this morning, which he found just as he had left it, but no slave was within.

"Saddle my horses—prepare my boats, and call up my chokeydars," commanded

the furious Mussulman: "let them beat every bush with more care than they ever did for the most savage animal. I shall have him dead or alive, and I shall know who has dared to do this in defiance of my orders, which none shall ever do and live."

Shere Ishmael despatched his several messengers in every direction in hopes of overtaking the fugitives, whom he conjectured could not be far off, as he wisely considered that his long captivity must have injured his powers of walking; he caused minute search to be made within and without the enclosure, where the prints of the footsteps of two persons were clearly visible. One, from the spread of the toes, was at once discerned to be a native; the other, for the opposite reason, was pronounced to be European.

"Here," said Shere Ishmael, while he foamed at the mouth with passion on the discovery, "here the infidel dog has passed under the guidance of some of my people: look at those marks on the sand, and tell me

if they are not those of a foot accustomed to wear a shoe, and the other that went before —whose are they?"

He caused every one present to measure the suspicious prints by his foot, but they were found not to answer; it was therefore clear that they, at any rate, were not the offending party.

"Allumgier," said the gardener, "Allumgier, sahib?—Where did he go the day you turned him from your home?"

"How should I know what became of a slave like him? But you say the truth—he has left this token of my fault for not giving his head to feed the kites, as I would have done but for that infidel dog. Oh! if I can but take them, the birds will not meet with loss by the delay."

He ground his teeth and stamped on the spot where he stood, moving a little switch which he carried in his hand, like a lion lashing his tail in preparation to spring upon his enemy. The traces of the steps were

lost in the jungle, where twenty little paths lead to the huts scattered about under the trees, and to the river-side.

"A light boat has already fallen down the river," said Shere Ishmael, "and the horsemen are out over the country; so that though they are loose for a moment, without wings they cannot escape from my hands. I would have the world to know that in this land, none dare walk a step, or respire a breath of air, contrary to the pleasure of Shere Ishmael."

The boast was vain, for while it was making, Colonel Ross and his faithful Allumgier had already entered the country of a man with whom Shere Ishmael was in such a state of open hostility, that he dared not venture to risk his men within his power, and Allumgier confidently proposed to Colonel Ross to pass the day in rest and shade.

"It makes my heart happy to think how Shere Ishmael will rave like a madman when he finds that you are gone. He

banished me who was born in his house, who lived in the shadow of his protection, and who eat of his salt, and who was never guilty of a fault, and he would have given me over to death like a wild beast if you had not shown mercy; but I am not without my revenge, and he will know that it was Allumgier who did it. We may rest now, we shall not be noticed by those who are ignorant of it, and Shere Ishmael's men dare not seek us here."

"But if," said Colonel Ross, "they bring a present in their hands, the way will be open to them."

"True, sahib:" Allumgier was in his state of freedom ready to acknowledge the superiority of the European. "True, sahib, but if they come at all, it will be in too much haste for such a wise thought, and before they can get what fills the mouths of all men with sweet words, and makes all troubles smooth, we shall be gone."

Reassured by such reasoning, Colonel Ross stopped for the food and rest of which

he was so much in need, and gave his friend money to purchase what was wanted for both. Refreshed by repose, towards evening they left the place in a fisherman's dingy, afraid to excite suspicion by the purchase of horses, as their outward appearance did not entitle them to any such luxury. Being now in safety, they went forward at their ease, taking care, however, to avoid any thing which could create an idea that they had money in their possession, and they reached the Sind or the Indus without accident; thence after much fatigue and exposure, they made their way to Bombay, the nearest European presidency.

Colonel Ross lost not an hour in writing to his agents at Madras for information regarding his child, and to inform them of his own existence, and he waited for an answer to his letter before deciding upon the steps he was to take. The answer when it did arrive, overturned the hopes which he had permitted himself to indulge with too much

security: it convinced him that he had lost her for ever. They told him that they had never either seen or heard of his servant and his child, and to their certain knowledge neither the one nor the other had ever been heard of at Madras; that the regiment to which Colonel Ross belonged, had embarked for Europe at the time of his supposed death, which had been announced in the newspapers, as if he and his party had been cut off by the Arabs: and this account was brought by the sepoys who had declared themselves to be the only individuals who had escaped the general massacre—an account so probable that none had ever thought of doubting its accuracy. There were none of the friends for whom Colonel Ross had inquired, in existence at Madras; a few had returned to their native country, and the greater number were finally withdrawn from life and its anxieties. Of his fortune his agents were able to give a much more satisfactory account: interest had nearly trebled the original amount, and his

accounts were in readiness whenever he chose to call for them.

This letter, then, for which he had so anxiously waited, informed Colonel Ross that he was rich, childless, and friendless; for it had brought such a blight upon his hopes that he hardly dared to entertain expectations of finding his family at home, any more than he had done the numerous circle of friends which he quitted when he left Madras. He had now no inducement to revisit that presidency, and after settling his pecuniary affairs resolved to quit India for ever.

Having liberally rewarded Allumgier, and settled a pension upon him for his important service, Colonel Ross left him in the service of an officer at Bombay, as he dared not show himself in his own country while Shere Ishmael lived, and then embarked for England, but by stress of weather was forced into a port on the east coast of Ireland, where he found the vessel, whose wreck we have just witnessed, preparing to

sail for Scotland, and in which he easily procured a passage. Change from a large vessel to a small one had caused a degree of illness which kept him to his cot, and it was not until he engaged the captain by a handsome sum to land him on the west coast of Scotland, at a small fishing-village which he mentioned, that he understood that there was a naval officer on board who wished to be set on shore at the same place. Malcolm Sinclair and he had not, therefore, seen each other until the commencement of the sudden storm which ended so fatally for the vessel, and disastrously for so many on board. This it was which prevented the explanation which would probably have taken place, had the two gentlemen met at a time when their minds were more disengaged.

CHAPTER XVI.

Then when I saw he wooed me well,
I grew so proud his suit to see,
That I, who did not know mysel,
Thought scorn o' such a youth as he.

Ancient Ballads.

On the morning after the wreck, care had been taken to recover as much of the seamen's and passenger's baggage as was not destroyed by the sea. Every man in the neighbourhood gladly lent his assistance to collect and save the effects of those who had suffered so much, and as the vessel had gone to pieces very near the shore, most of the sailors' chests, and the trunks of the gentlemen had been washed up by the tide. The wounded men under the care of their

kind host continued to do well, and the captain with the rest took their departure from Fernbraes after a thousand expressions of gratitude for the hospitality received.

Mr. Manning remained a guest, by the pressing invitation of Dr. M'Alpin, who rejoiced in the opportunity to show his sense of the service rendered to Cussim Ali. Malcolm Sinclair heard at Stoneyards as much of the late events as his sister thought proper to tell him; his father's death was to him perfectly unexpected, and though it was not an occurrence of which he could hear with indifference, it was not a sorrow, like that for his mother, at a much earlier age.

Jamesina, willing to accept the consolation in her power, left her sister Miss Barbara to the management of the household affairs at Stoneyards, and returned to Fernbraes, upon pretence, as she told Hugh, of serving his interests with his uncle.

Colonel Ross was in a few days so much recovered, that he prepared to take possession of his own house, which he instantly

restored to its ancient name of Inchbraken, fortunately in time to save the old burying-ground which Miss Robina so much loved and respected, from the projected *improvements* of Murdoch. He had been now absent for some weeks, and had never written a line even to inform his sister of his safe arrival at the place of his destination, —he must consequently be ignorant of the changes which so short a time had brought about amongst those he had quitted.

Fernbraes enjoyed all his heart could desire in the happiness and society of his friends; he saw clearly that as soon as decent respect for his father's memory permitted Malcolm to speak, the families of Ross and M'Alpin would yet be united by nearer ties. Colonel and Mrs. Cheapstow enjoyed the happiness which they had been the means of procuring. "Had it not been for your kindness, Mrs. Cheapstow," Colonel Ross used to say, "and your husband's generosity, my Eleonora might still, unknown to me, have been dragging on a sordid exist-

ence at Madras, while I pined here in widowed wretchedness."

Jamesina alone sighed in secret—*Mr. Ross* was absent, and even if he did return, he was no longer *Kelpfield*—still he had his own West Indian fortune, which though perhaps decreased by the indulgence of his *very elegant taste*, would be sufficient for one of her managing talents, particularly as her own private fund would be more than enough for her own use—*private* it must remain, as she could not with all her ingenuity account for such sums being in her possession; a hardship the greater, as she felt that the knowledge would probably go something towards fixing Mr. Murdoch's decisions.

In this state of mind she was one morning interrupted by a visit from Mr. Shiftwell, when the rest of the family had dispersed on their several amusements. "I have been wishing very much to see you, Mr. Shiftwell," she said, as he entered and shut the door after him, "that I might have

your opinion ye ken aboot the money that comes to me on my father's death."

"Ye havena wished more to see me, than I have to see you, Miss Jamesina," he answered, with a hypocritical smile of peculiar meaning; "but what is the matter in hand?"

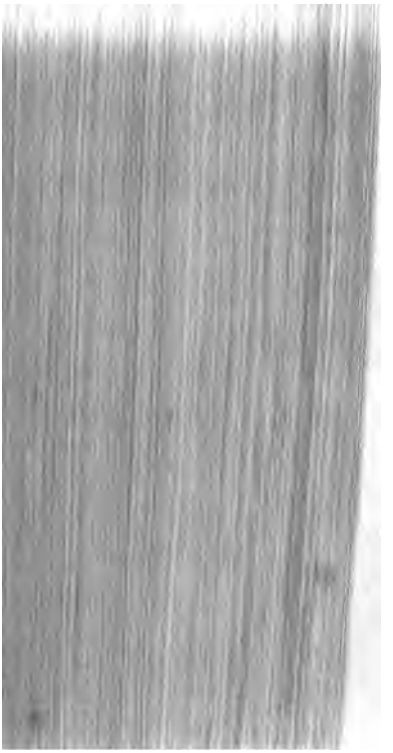
"Ye see that my brother, the young laird, has had the generosity to gie me my portion, the first thing he did—no but that I have well merited kindness at his hand—and, as I didna wish to lose the interest, I wanted to put it into your hands."

"Nothing can be more sensible—nothing can be more reasonable."

"I'll bring the money this moment, and ye can just gi' me a bit receipt for it, and take it awa wi' you."

Miss Jamesina left the room and returned with her bag, containing all her treasure.

"But ye needna, Mr. Shiftwell, drop a word of this to any body, for though my brother in consideration, as I said before, of my great services to him, gave me what was



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protection, that's to say, a man who kens the law, and one too who kens more of these than ye may think. I am come here, Miss Jamesina, to offer myself for your husband, as nobody can help you better than myself."

"My husband, Mr. Farquhar Shiftwell! And how dared such a thought ever come into your head?"

Provoked as he might be, he had a point to carry, and therefore did not lose temper.

"The thought came into my head for your good," he answered; "for if inquiries are made into a' things ye'll may be want a friend who kens the law, as I said before, to haud by ye and tak your part—and who wad have so much interest in doing that as your humble servant, if he was your husband?"

"I dinna ken—I canna presume to guess, what ye are talking aboot, or what ye are thinking aboot, Mr. Shiftwell," said Jamesina, ready to burst into tears of pride and vexation.

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your brother, that on second thoughts ye wish to let this sum lie in his hands."

"Ye'll do nothing of the kind, Mr. Shiftwell—gi' me the bag, and I'll do it mysel."

"Not trust it to me to tak over the hill—how is that? Do ye think," he said with a malicious sneer, "that your brother wad be surprised to see so much more in the bag than he put there?—More than five hundred pound that was settled by old Donald Fox, for the younger bairns by your grandfather?—He does na ken, Miss Jamesina, how money can grow in your hands."

"Ye are in a merry humour this morning, I think, Mr. Shiftwell, and so obstinate that I maun let a wilful man tak his way, though it's very hard that I canna do what I like wi' my own money."

"Ye need na fash yoursel aboot that; just tak time to think of the proposal I have made till ye, and be certain that no one will ever hear what this contains, or know how it came there. Good morning, my dear Miss Jamesina—I am a reasonable man that

kens business, and dinna expect that ye are to mak up your mind on an important offer just in a minute. I have a good place open to me in Aberdeen, and am sure ye wad like it."

Taking her hand which she dared not refuse, for fear of exasperating him, he repeated his odious compliments and took his departure; leaving the lady in a state of indignation and mortification, which it would be difficult to picture.

"What is to be done now?" thought she, "how am I to get out of this hobble?—it's plain that mean, prying, suspicious body, Farquhar Shiftwell, weary on the auld farrand snout o' him, has got to the bottom o' this job—he knows my father's part in it, and he kens mine, and I am at the mercy o' a creature like him—one word o' his ill scrapit tongue, for as smooth and as oily as he can mak it, wad bring Hugh, like a tiger on my back, and all that I have done for years might be lost for a moment, to say nothing o' the disgrace of such a business; and more

than that, there's no a deed that has been done for the last twenty years but he can tell! How he has houkit, like a mole in the dark, for a' that knowledge is a marvel to me! Of all that ever has befallen me, this is the worst, and how I am to get out of it passes my skill!—I have only one hope—If Murdoch Ross wad come back as he should do, that bit body daurna dispute wi' the like o' him. Often as I have wished to be his wife, I never had so much need of it as at this moment; but I winna despair—nothing is to be got by faltering on the way, and I'll just keep a fair face wi' this upstart body, and if it wad be to gain time, let him think forsooth, it sets well the cocket nose o' him, that when my money is placed, I'll listen to his proposals. Many things fall out between the cup and the lip, and I'll may be find ways yet to be upsides wi' him for his presuming pretensions. The like o' him, a little petty fogan writer in a borough town, that was recommended to me as a sort of Davy-

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to disguise her chagrin, which her uncle, when he observed it, attributed to the absence of Mr. Murdoch, and almost regretted that he had not been in the way upon the desired day, which would have spared her such vexation.

CHAPT

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" Look there, Mrs.

thrusting her head out of the window, "there is the handsomest carriage I have ever seen in the country coming straight to the house, and the outriders, too, are in the Ross livery —Who can it be, Miss Robina? can it be your brother returned from London with that fine new equipage?"

"Nothing is more likely," answered Miss Ross, rising and going to the window, "such a thing as that is quite to Murdoch's taste."

"A man had need to have a wife to require such a gay set out," said the doctor.

"Or be upon the point of taking one," said Colonel Cheapstow.

Miss Jamesina, unable to bear the flow of agreeable ideas, caused by this suggestion, retired to a sofa, where she set herself in her best attitude and endeavoured to compose her fluttered spirits, and the rest of the party left the window where they had been making their observations, each having a different feeling towards the owner of the fine vehicle

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an amiable friend in Miss Jamesina Sinclair."

The lady thus addressed, stammered some awkward speech about "wishing him joy." And the bride casting a look of triumphant comparison from the homely figure who stood before her in plain mourning, to her own showy person, graciously "hoped that she would have a further opportunity of cultivating the acquaintance of a lady who stood so high in the esteem of her husband."

"But indeed, I am perfectly charmed with every thing here, I find it exactly as Mr. Ross told me. How I admire the elegant taste of this room, and every thing about the house! indeed I am quite proud to consider myself mistress of such a place."

Mrs. Ross, satisfied that she had won all hearts by her engaging affability, smiled graciously on the party to whom her speech was addressed; but Miss Jamesina, unwilling

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"Eleonora, my dear," she continued, turning to the young lady, who at this moment entered the room, followed by her father. "Eleonora, my dear, come here and be introduced to your uncle, and your aunt —Mr. Murdoch, I have the pleasure to introduce to your love and regard, the young heiress of Kelpfield," taking Eleonora's hand as she spoke, and putting it into that of her uncle; "but what's the matter?" observing that the disconcerted bridegroom was mute. "Here's the colonel, come to make you sure of the fact. Come, colonel, speak for yourself, and welcome Mr. and Mrs. Murdoch Ross to your own house."

Miss Jamesina, a little revived by the vexation she imparted to others, took manifest satisfaction in the humiliation of her faithless admirer."

"My dear Murdoch," said Colonel Ross, unconscious of all which had just passed.

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menting the new-married pair, but when she could find an opportunity of doing so without his observation; and then she persecuted "Mrs. Murdoch," as she made a point of calling her, with a detail of all "the improvements Mr. Murdoch, when he thought himself the laird, had intended to make; but you see, Mrs. Murdoch," she continued, "things do not turn out always in this troublesome world just as we would have them; and though it was very natural for you to be pleased at the thoughts of having such a good house to come to, all ready furnished to your hand, yet do not be cast down, I dare say it will be possible to get some snug little place, at no great distance, and the colonel, who is always kind and generous, will send his carriage to bring you here often, for I suppose *now* Mr. Murdoch will not keep the fine new carriage he brought from London with him—indeed I am sure his brother is so generous that he will give him the full price it cost, as he

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know, Mrs. Murdo
have the use of it."

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about Mr. Murdoch
of his fine taste, h
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more independent.
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had the second sigh

and bring down a wife wi' a fortune, at a time when the rents o' Inchbraken will no be forthcoming to mak up a' deficiencies."

All this passed off very well, with Jamesina, while she had the malevolent satisfaction of thwarting two people whom she detested; but when she was alone, in her own apartment, tears of spite and vexation forced themselves unbidden from her eyes: to be slighted and scorned by Murdoch Ross, and to be laughed at and ridiculed by his wife, while she was pitied by every one else in the house, was more than her philosophy, practical as it was, could stand.

"He, the false, heartless traitor that he is! could not be satisfied with sneaking away when he found that I was not the heiress of Fernbraes, but he must tell a hundred lies, and bring this senseless London gowk of a wife to triumph over me. And to tell me how high I stood in her husband's esteem, forsooth;—but I think I was even with her—I think I brought down her pride

a little. It becomes the like o' her, mad up of ends o' lace, and bits of ribbon, t compare herself to a sensible, managing clever woman, like me, though I say it, tha shouldna say it, that's fit to buy and sell dozen o' her, the best day she ever saw, an she no ken that she was sold. I think wad hae gone distracted on the very spot if his eldest brother hadna been here as on purpose to gie me the power o' turnin the tables upon them. It's no six week gone, in this very house, that he praised m taste up to the very skies, and now to think o' his taking that butterfly cratur to mock a me; it's no to be borne!—and me in such situation, too,—for it's no to be suppose that I'll be well at Fernbraes after Malcol brings home a new mistress ; my uncle wi no be able to see the light o' day for her and where will I be? If I am no in favou wi' him, its vain to think o' Hugh, wh never liked me, and thick-skulled as he is it only keeps a fair show because he thinks I am all in all wi' our uncle ;—and then

Farquhar Shiftwell—what am I to do wi' him? Was ever poor girl so ill-used and tormented!—But I'll no sit tamely down under it all,—I'll no bear to see them all ride over my neck this gate."

CHAPTER

There's not a wretch that live
But's happier than I: for I h
The luscious sweets of plenty
Yet now my hopes must fall,
Whose blossoms 'scaped, yet's

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pony, and rode home
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had forgotten. During
was surprised by anc
Shiftwell, who, having
of all that passed about
his own elegant expres

be wise to strike the iron while it was hot."

"You have had time, Miss Jamesina," he said, "like a sensible woman as ye are, to consider of the proposal I made when I had last the pleasure to converse with you in this room, and I am now come for your answer."

This plain, business-like statement she affected to take as a joke. "Ye are a queer man, Mr. Shiftwell, that thinks of speaking to ladies in their first mourning, wi' their weepers on, aboot things of the kind."

"Miss Jamesina, it is but right and fair that we should understand one another, and come to the point at once, which I take to be this:—I, Farquhar Shiftwell, want to marry you, Jamesina Sinclair; and you, Jamesina Sinclair, want, if ye can without appearing to do it, to slip through my fingers, but it's right to set the matter before you, and then ye'll see if the end is worth the cost."

Jamesina felt alarmed by the steady pur-

pose of his manner, and saw at once that he was perfectly sure of his ground, else he would never have dared to talk to her in such a fashion, but she was caught in her own trap, and forced to be humble.

"I have known you for many a year, Miss Jamesina, and thought ye wad suit me for a wife: and noo that your family is compromised by the conduct of your late father—" (Jamesina became red and then white, but said nothing), "and further that *ye* have put yourself in the power of the law, if this sum taken from your late father's drawers comes to be spoken of, I thought that I would suit you for a husband, particularly as others have provided for themselves."

Jamesina was ready to burst with indignation, but he was resolved not to see it, and went on calmly. "My regard for you, Miss Jamesina, made me think (for nobody has a higher respect for your talents) that as all the changes that have taken place, and will come to pass, cannot make things just

so agreeable to your wishes; and when ye were mistress here yourself—for it's no pleasant for any one to have a young lady to be mistress over their nose—I thought that though my poor house was no exactly what ye have been accustomed to, I wad offer it to you, thinking that ye wad be more comfortable, as the mistress there, than waiting at the beck of any other body."

Jamesina felt the full drift of this terrifying harangue, and her usual courage for a moment forsook her. "Ye canna mean to say, Mr. Shiftwell, that ye wad betray the confidence I have always placed in you?"

"No, certainly, if ye are my wife; but otherwise law and justice must take their course."

The frightful words operated an instant change. "But my uncle, Mr. Shiftwell, and my brother, they will never be brought to gi' their consent."

"Then do not ask it."

"*But*, Mr. Shiftwell, it passes the bounds of possibility that I should disgrace my

family by taking a hidling step of that kind without their consent, and it's what I can never be brought to think o'. Be fair and honourable, Mr. Shiftwell, just ask my uncle's consent, and if ye get that, I'll no say ye nay."

"Na, na, Miss Jamesy! he's no a wise man that wad try to mount the brae, when he could turn the shuther; and as to talking o' disgracing your family, ye ken there's no need indeed to think o' that, after a' that's come and gone, unless ye want me indeed to be fair and honourable wi' your uncle, and tell him all that has happened; and noo that ye put it in my head, I'm no sure but it wad be the wisest plan. I wad may be get his consent and thanks into the bargain."

The speaker stopped to see what effect this new threat would produce. He knew it was one he dared not put into execution; mean as he was, he had still been able to conceive an idea of Fernbraes near enough to the truth to make him sensible that such

conduct would not go unpunished; but he knew also poor Jamesina's need of secrecy, and spared not to make her sensible how much she was within his power.

"Ye little ken my uncle, if ye hae a thought o' that kind, Mr. Shiftwell, and if ye'll tak my advice ye'll no try it."

"I'm ay willing to please you, ye ken, Miss Jamesina, in a' that's reasonable, and if to make a long matter short, for ye ken that it must be, ye'll gie me your solemn promise in black and white, I'll no say ony thing more aboot it, but what is bygone will gang wi' me to the grave, and ye'll live in honour and credit. May be some of your kin wha holds up their heads so high just noo, will mak the best o' it when the thing is passed, and just draw in their chair, and eat a finnan haddie wi' us when they come to Aberdeen, and some o' the rest will no hae the pleasure o' seeing ye dependant upon others as ye are now."

Stimulated by this idea, Jamesina took up a pen, and gave the wished-for promise;

Mr. Shiftwell, satisfied that he had carried his point, prudently took his leave, knowing that though there might be a few struggles the field was his.

"And is it come to this?" thought Jamesina, after her future protector had left her. "Have I really signed a paper to deliver myself over, like butter or cheese, into the hands of Farquhar Shiftwell, auld Donald Fox's clerk, a cratur I suppose that never had ony parents, at least none that I ever heard o'. Is all my plotting and planning come to this? I have, it wad seem, put so many irons into the fire, that they hae put out the fire itsel at last, and all the odium will fa' upon me. Me that has been held up as a pattron to young women far and near, to be necessitate to mak mysel a laughingstock to a' the haverels in the country by rinnin awa wi' Farquhar Shiftwell. They may weel say I was desperate when I did that; a bonny-like cratur to rin awa wi'. Mony a one that I hae hauden doon will rejoice to find such a flaw; but I'll no be here to

hear a' that will be said aboot it, as he said, I'll be glad to win to Aberdeen or ony gate out o' their hearing. Oh, it's no this way that I thought o' being married! Another sort o' figure, Murdoch wad hae made in his bonny green coat before a minister, to that snuffy body in his auld blacks and grey worsted stockings wi' a brown wig on his head. I wad na wonder to see a pen sticking out from behind the lug o' him, and I'm to promise to honour and *obey* the like o' him; me that never obeyed any body in this warld, and whatever I think I dawna say a word to him, I maun be as meek as pussy, or hear talk o' the country-jail to me. Sorrow fa' the time that I ever took him into my secrets!"

Decent Mr. Shiftwell was on his part quite satisfied with the point to which he had brought the affair; he considered like many other philosophers, that the necessity of existing circumstances would do the rest; that as Miss Jamesina neither dared to deceive or disappoint him—fixed as she was by the

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own unceasing subser
necessary to her as s
and his expectations
wealth grew.

"Let her wait
thought, "and for a
family, she'll maybe b
at Farquhar Shiftwell

Her father's atrocious conduct brought his plots to a more speedy termination.

"The fear of exposing what he had done will make her consent to any thing I like to offer;" and in this certainty he set forth to make preparation in a style something different from that generally observed on such occasions.

It happened that he had seen in his old master's possession the marriage contract between Stoneyards and Miss M'Alpin, which provided for the younger children; and as soon as Jamesina produced her bag containing a sum so much beyond it, he was, from his knowledge of her habits, fully satisfied of the way it had come there. Her change of colour assured him that he was right, and furnished him with authority over her, from which it was impossible she could escape. He could never expect the consent of her uncle and brother to a marriage with him, but that was a matter of little consequence.

"When the deed is done," he thought, "they will be forced to make the best of it,

and if they wad na disgrace her, they maun uphaud me. I'll be out of the country for a while to let their wrath cool, and when I come back a' will be forgotten, and I'll haud up my head amangst the best o' them—her fortune will help me weel on, and it will gang hard wi' me, but I find ways and means to mak them do the rest. I wad like that this job could hae been managed without the rinnin' awa, which will be a fine tale to tell amongst a' the writer-lads in the office. The best way will be, to settle a' for my moving first, and then Jamesy and I just to mak a moonlight flitting o' it."

CHAPTER XIX.

Fair lovers you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.—
I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by with us,
These couples shall eternally be knit.
——————————— Three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

Mr. Murdoch Ross had declared his intention to purchase any place in the neighbourhood which might suit him, and to which he was determined to give his favourite appellation of Kelpfield, discarded by his brother, who also wished to restore "all the tasty furniture," as Mrs. Murdoch called it, to their rightful possessor.

Jamesina, who never lost an opportunity of making this charming pair feel their change of circumstances, made her entrance one morning into the dining-room, after the whole family were seated at breakfast, "I hope I have no made any body wait," she said, "but if I have, it's all to help you, Mr. Murdoch. I was just hearing of a snug bit place to sell, which wad suit you particular well—it was built by some corky head from London, who wanted what he called a 'snug box' for the shooting. Boxes is what ye ca' your houses near the city, Mrs. Murdoch, is no it?—and this a' painted green and yellow and pink, just they tell me to suit your London taste—an' there's room in it, Mr. Murdoch, for the Venus, and the shepherdess, wi' the flock o'gold fishes, and a' the rest, and ye can ca' it Kelpfield, ye ken, now that this place has got back its auld name of Inchbraken."

"If the place were large enough, it might suit," said Murdoch.

"If it's built by a Londoner, I am sure it's

in high state," answered his wife, "they are the only people who have any idea of comfort."

"As ye say, Mrs. Murdoch, it's more comfortable to be in a place of one's own, though it should be never so little, rather than in a fine place like this, which belongs to another."

"La! Mr. Ross we had better go and see it."

"Do that, do that," continued the pertinacious Jamesina, "and dinna forget to look out for a warm stand for the Venus."

"I know the place that Jamesina is talking about very well," said Fernbraes, "but I never heard it was to sell; what makes the man part with it before he has ever inhabited it?"

"He finds himself no just so rich as he thought, I fancy, uncle—that happens to mony a one, ye ken—what's dreed for a' folks comes to pass. Did ye ken o' a prophecy in your family, colonel, before ye let them cut

that pine that I saw as I came through the policy this morning?"

"I do not know to what you allude, Miss Sinclair," answered Colonel Ross. "I did not know that our house was of importance sufficient to have a prophecy attached to it."

"How droll that is! but ye have fulfilled it though—is na it, Mr. Murdoch, that

"When at Inchbraken they cut the first pine,
'Twill pass from the male to the female line?"

"It's funny, is na it, that the cornal, who canna bear to hae a tree cuttit, should the very first thing that he does, cut without minding it, one of the very trees that ye, who were so fond o' hewing and felling, wadna hae put a hatchet upon for your life? but, as I said before, we canna pass our fate."

"A good Hindoo maxim that, Jamesina; but I believe there are other people in the world who think that we come into it with our nisibs on our foreheads, if they do not say it in the same words."

Fortunately the "shooting-box" suited the tastes of Mr. and Mrs. Murdoch Ross, who considered that they could easily display their own by the addition of wings, which would make it all that could be desired for the residence of a genteel family, and to be upon the spot, the purchase was no sooner made than they took their departure from Inchbraken to commence operations.

Jamesina was a little provoked with what she called "the cornal's folly," in sending all the beautiful pea-green and rose furniture for Mrs. Murdoch's use,—"less might serve her indeed," she said, "but your eldest brother, Robina, is just like my uncle, himself is the last person he thinks of."

"Never mind, Jamesy," said Fernbraes, who just then joined the two ladies, "do not regret these fineries, I have been this moment writing to London to have new furniture for Fernbraes, with the exception of my own private apartments, Miss Robina, I'll new furnish every bit of it."

"And that, too," thought Jamesina, "just

at the moment I am going to leave it—was ever any thing so unlucky? but wi' me a' things hae taken a turn."

"Though I thought every thing very well for me, Miss Robina," Fernbraes continued, "just as my grandfather left it, yet I would like to have things in another way for our young bride; and I have ordered a service of china and plate for the table, Jamesy—ye'll like that?"

"It's more than ye wad ever do for me though, ye ken uncle, often as I have asked ye to do it."

"That's true, Jamesy; but this is for your brother's young wife, ye ken."

"Mrs. Cheapstow has, I find, taken the wedding-sow out of my hands," said Robina.

"It's of a piece with the rest of her kindness to our Eleonora, but she went to my brother and told him that as she had considered Eleonora as her own child, she would not give up her right to get her wedding-clothes."

"I'll never stay to see it though," thought

Jamesina, "it's more than I can bear—I'll even, since I must rin, tak to my heels before a' these fine doings pit me crazy a'thegither. One wad think that a' body was banded together to torment me, and I'm sure if Mr. Shiftwell only knew it, he could never choose a time like the present. I'll try if I can mak him get for me some of a' the fine things that are showered down thick and threefold on others. An my uncle too, that wadna change an old stick at Fernbraes for me, no sooner hears of this bit lassie being Malcolm's wife, that there is nothing too good for her; but, as I said before, I'll no stay and see it; it's no adequate to me to do it, and I'll even, as Mr. Shiftwell wants me, tak French leave of them a'. Even Robina's very head is as much turned as the rest o' them; I dinna see a wise-like cratur amongst them, but that Mr. Manning as they ca' him, that new friend o' my uncle's—wha kens;" even in the midst of perplexity, Jamesina could not give up her old habit of scheming, "wha kens if it had na been for this body Shift-

well, but I might hae gotten him; he's a more personable man, though I am no sure but he is looking sweet upon Barbara, and if that's the case, my uncle, in his gratitude, will be sure to gie her something to help them on. Well, amongst them a' I wad hae been left bare indeed if I hadna taken some forethought for time to come."

Jamesina, in support of a character which she so well deserved, made constant visits to her own apartment at Fernbraes, where she collected and packed all that she could call hers, and took the opportunity of workmen's being in the house, and a greater number of people coming and going, to send away without observation some of her property to a place of secrecy before her. Manning, as she had shrewdly conjectured, had begun to think of her sister Miss Barbara, and under the protection of Miss Robina Ross, the affair was soon brought to a favourable conclusion. Fernbraes, Colonel Ross, and Colonel Cheapstow, offered their joint interest to procure him the com-

mand of a ship, and Fernbraes who thought himself particularly happy in the opportunity of serving his niece and friend together, presented her with a handsome sum in addition to her slender dower.

The marriage of Malcolm and Eleonora was settled to take place as soon as the house at Fernbraes should be in readiness to receive them. Mr. Manning and Miss Barbara were to take advantage of the same day. In the mean time, Mr. and Mrs. Murdoch Ross were deep in stone and mortar; their new Kelpfield, was to excel the old. The young laird of Stoneyards, finding that they were the members of the family most congenial to his taste, often strolled over to them, and bestowed there the hours, of which he would not otherwise have known how to dispose.

A few days before that intended for the double wedding, the family at Inchbraken were thrown into some disquiet by the non-appearance of Miss Jamesina; at first her

absence was not much noticed, but after the return of the servants who had been sent to seek her, Fernbraes began to wonder what could have become of Jamesy.

"Do you think she could have gone, Miss Robina, to your brother Murdoch's?"

"It's not likely," answered Robina; "but where can she be?"

"The little lady went out to house last night, what time them go to bed," said Cussim Ali.

"Out of the house at that hour, Cussim? You surely mistake!"

"No, sahib, not mistake—my own eyes see—she come down stairs like mouse, with bundle to arm, and steal out door like one jackal."

"What that could be for is more than I can imagine," said Fernbraes. "Miss Robina, what could my niece have to take her out at that hour?"

"Nothing that I know of," answered Miss Ross; "unless, indeed, she was anxious to

get every thing ready at Fernbraes, and as the night was so fine, just took a ride over without saying a word to any body, though it was certainly a little late—but she knows the country so well that there is nothing to be afraid of."

"I do not like the idea of her going out alone, though, at that hour, and I'll even take my horse and go home to see what is become of her."

"Or, you know," said Robina, "it might have been to Stoneyards just the same."

Fernbraes gave orders that a man should go instantly to Stoneyards to inquire if Miss Sinclair had gone there, and to come to him at Fernbraes with the answer to save time; it was not possible, at all events, that at that hour she could have gone to Mr. and Mrs. Murdoch Ross's.

When Fernbraes arrived at his own house, he heard from Mrs. Corbat that Miss Jamesina had been there the day before, but had left it to go back to Inchbraken

before dinner—" and indeed, sir, I may as well tell you that I was very much surprised to find that she had sent away all her trunks."

" And what did she do that for, Elspa?"

" I canna guess, if it bena that the workmen were to be in her room, and that she didna like to trust them."

" That would be a queer reason for sending every thing out of my house—but here is the man from Stoneyards—well, did you see my niece?"

" Na, sir,—Miss Sinclair has no been o'er the hill for eight days, and she sent to tak awa a' the things of hers that were there, as she wanted them, she told Tibbie, for the ordering that was going on here."

" There's more in this," said the doctor, " than I can find out."

" Maybe this bit letter will help you, sir—one o' the herds found it, where our land and the Inchbraken, joins the King's high-road."

Fernbraes took an opened crumpled letter, written on half-a-sheet of paper, which had been closed with a wafer, and which began as follows:

"Dear Miss Jamesina,

"Every thing is now ready—all and whole of my goods and chattles are sent off, and I have taken leave of my friends this day, as if I would set out at a good hour, but I'll keep myself quiet till after nightfall, and then be ready to meet you with the horses. I am sorry I could not get a better conveyance than a covered coup to send for you, but I dared not run the risk of a shay, for fear of discovery, and you have too much sense to stand upon stepping-stones in a time of necessity like the present.

"The coup, which has plenty of clean straw in it, will be in waiting at the foot of the avenue, as I cannot venture to come with it myself, I have sent a sure hand, and will meet you with the horses at the four mile-

stone on the East Ro
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"Depending upon
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further information;-

wonder if that sneaking body, Farquhar Shiftwell, were at the bottom of all this—he has had several conversations with Jamesina lately."

"It's not possible that he could have had the arrogance to think of her, or she the folly to listen to him if he had."

"I'm not so sure of that when I remember all things," answered Robina.

She knew enough of Shiftwell to be certain, that if he had wormed out what had passed at Stoneyards, he might have got Jamesina to agree, though she could not drop a hint on the subject to any body.

Fernbraes anxious for certain information, left the room in order to procure it; in the mean time Mr. and Mrs. Murdoch entered, both screaming at once, "Did you ever hear of such an elopement!"

"Think of a young lady running away in a covered cart," said Mr. Murdoch, "all alone!—Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the swain an old writer's clerk, waiting upon a horse standing quietly by a

milestone till she came up!" joined Mrs. Ross—"Ha! he! he! la! My dear could ever any thing be so funny!"

"What are you talking of?" inquired Miss Robina, "and where did you get your information?"

"Talking of, Miss Robina?" answered Mrs. Ross, "why of Mr. Shiftwell and Miss Sinclair's elopement—and as for the information, every body in the country knows it by this time."

"The cart—ha! ha! ha!" joined Mr. Ross, "was such a light vehicle, that they were met by the market-people before they could gain the minister's house; but they are tied hard and fast by this time, Robina, never fear—there was no one to say *they* were under age."

The bundle which Miss Jamesina carried on her arm, and which had attracted the notice of Cussim Ali, contained a white dress, and some other articles of bridal attire; for though she was not a person to be easily startled, she was too superstitious

to think of going before a minister in black. This change of toilet then she was obliged to make in her covered coup, and having completed the metamorphosis, though not without some groans at the different manner she had reasonably expected it would have taken place, she had recourse to her old disguise, the riding-skirt, which she threw over her snow-white garment, and covering her shoulders with a shawl, jogged on at a leisurely pace. There was the unpleasantness of a quantity of straws sticking in her flounces, and betraying the inconveniences of her dressing apartment, but then she was not going into a drawing-room, and Mr. Farquhar Shiftwell was not the man to notice such trifles.

"This is the best thing I have ever heard," said Colonel Cheapstow, "a young lady of family and respectability to run off in the night after the household is gone to rest, with a crannie!"*

"And such a managing, fussy, careful

* Crannie—a writer.

person, too, as Miss Sinclair," joined Mrs. Cheapstow, " who would have imagined her mind to run upon such levities ?"

" If it were not for the vexation it must give my friend M'Alpin," said Colonel Ross, " I would so far forget my mussulman habits as to laugh outright at a flight, the oddest I have ever happened to meet with in my life."

" Your own from Shere Ishmael, colonel," said Mrs. Cheapstow, " was nothing to the novelty of this conveyance."

" Ay," joined Mrs. Murdoch Ross.

The door opened, and Miss Barbara, followed by Manning, made her appearance to sympathize in the terrible discovery.

" Who would have thought it," Miss Robina," she began,—" could any one have imagined, Mrs. Cheapstow, that a quiet, steady girl like my sister would have taken such a turn ?"

" Sailors' wives," observed Manning, " must not always expect to sail with a

fair wind, they must make up their minds Miss Barbara, sometimes to meet with squalls, though there is no denying but Miss Sinclair has shifted a point with a vengeance."

"If it were not that I'm well pleased to be rid of Jamesy at any rate," said young Stoneyards, "I would be very angry with this fellow Shiftwell presuming to come into our house, but really as he only took her out of it, there's the less harm done—no need for us to take the least notice of them."

"For shame, Stoneyards!" interrupted Robina, "is that the way you speak of your poor sister?"

"She has ruled over me many a time with a rod of iron—that was when she kept the keys," said the bright youth, laughing at his own wit.

"Very well indeed, Mr. Sinclair, you get on as I tell you—the cellar-key is indeed an iron sceptre," said Mrs. Murdoch; "nobody could be better if you were not so bashful,

but Mr. Ross and I shall give you lessons."

"It's not possible, Miss Robina, that my sister can have gone off with that animal!" said Malcolm, as he entered; "I have every inclination to follow and blow his brains out."

"Ye shall do nothing of the kind, Malcolm," joined his uncle, who came in after him; "I find it is all clear that the deed was her own doing—she had planned and arranged every thing for a month—and since that is the case, let her make trial of the lot she has chosen;—for my part I am resolved not to disturb the harmony of our present prospects with thoughts of her."

"If the act is her own," answered Malcolm, "that alters the case—she is certainly of age to choose for herself, and I am not so ungrateful, Eleonora, as to murmur, though her choice may have fallen very contrary to all our inclinations."

"Do not blame her now, Malcolm," re-

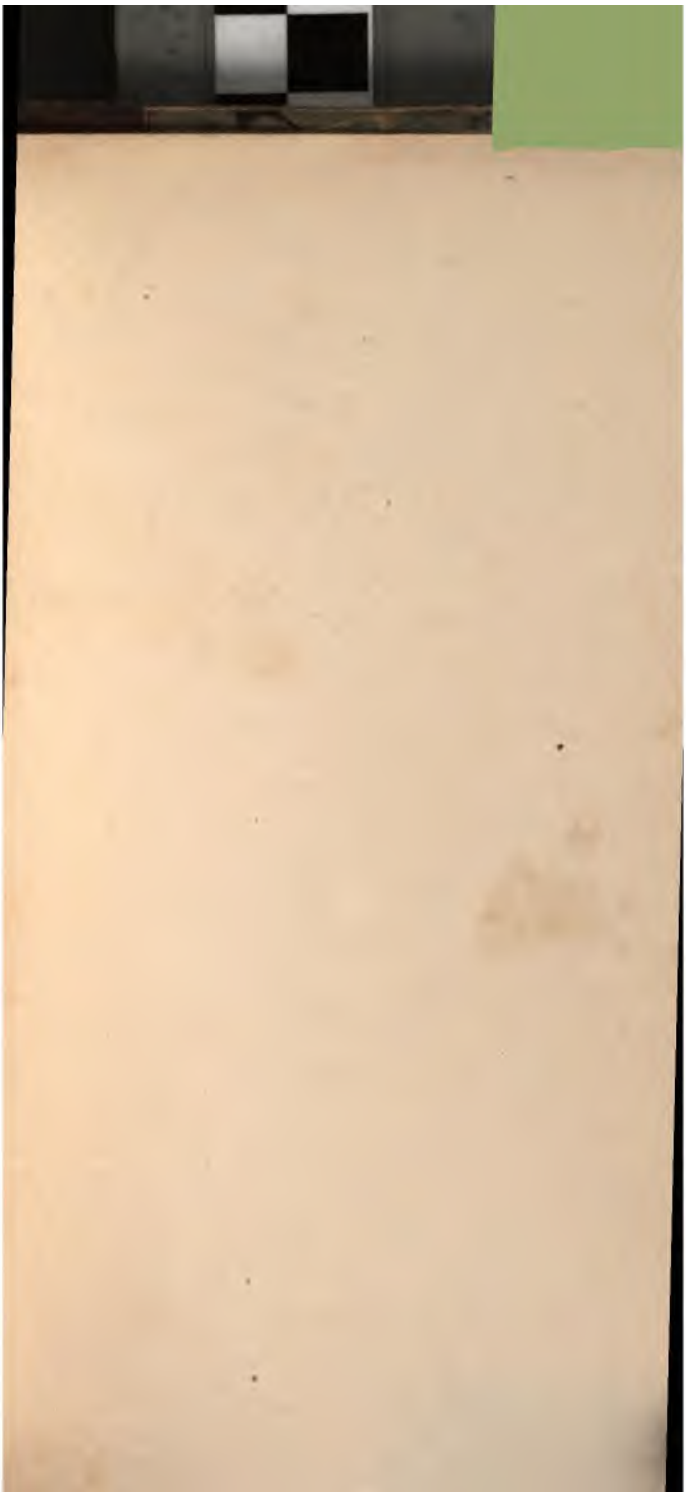
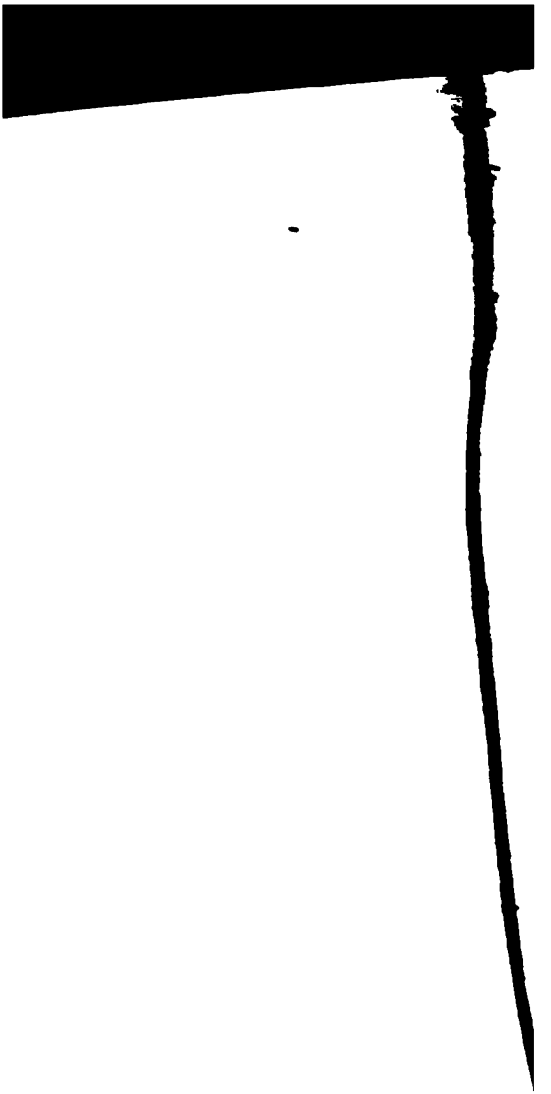
plied Eleonora, "when every one is joined against her—for my part I think she is greatly to be pitied."

"You must confess," joined Mrs. Murdoch, "that it was a little provoking for Miss Sinclair to see all her friends choosing for themselves, without thought of her—he! he! he! I hope though," she continued speaking aside to Miss Robina, "we shall have the lovely Mrs. Shiftwell soon back amongst us—I shall not be easy until I return her kind compliments to me on my arrival."

"Let us say no more on the subject, Mrs. Ross," answered Robina; "you know it cannot be pleasant to our good Malcolm and his worthy uncle—let us think and talk of what will be more agreeable to us all."

Nothing further occurred to derange their projected plans—the most gallant bonfire that had ever been seen in the country for a hundred years, blazed on its wonted site,

and Colonel Ross had the satisfaction of giving away his daughter, and Fernbraes of standing father to his dear Malcolm, and to Barbara on the day which joined the ancient houses of M'Alpin and Ross, and made the excellent proprietor of Fernbraes rejoice in having fulfilled his determination to take upon himself the character of "The Nabob at Home."

THE END.

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